The Church of the Parables

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THE CHURCH

OF

THE PARABLES

AND

TRUE SPOUSE

OF

The Suffering Saviour.

BY

JOSEPH PRACHENSKY,

Priest of the Society of Jesus.

3851

NEW YORK:
THE CATHOLIC PUBLICATION SOCIETY CO.,
9 BARCLAY STREET.
1880.

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INTRODUCTION.

A HUNDRED years of uninterrupted social progress have elapsed since the declaration of our national independence, and to-day we behold, with sentiments of pride and admiration, the wonderful works of that century. The many noble institutions, political, commercial, and literary, which cover the wide-spread face of our glorious republic, the active spirit which animates every department of human science, attest fully to all nations the energy and enterprise of our people. Like the soil of our country, our minds are fresh, vigorous, powerful, our hopes bright and lofty, our confidence in our capacities and destiny unbounded, our strides in the career of natural progress and every species of material well-being unparalleled. Life, vigorous life, flows through the veins of the millions who dwell between the great lakes and the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. On all sides is heard the hum of lucrative industry; every city and hamlet presents to us signs of wealth and improvement; each foot of land sheltered beneath the wings of the American eagle is a scene of busy life, every man wide awake to personal interest and pursuing with avidity the object of his ambition. Is not our lot most fortunate and enviable? And who would not be proud to claim such a country as his own, and thank Divine Providence for having cast his lot in

such a land and such an age as ours?—a land and an age so favored by nature and by Heaven, and destined to hold for ever an illustrious place in the annals of history. Surrounded as we are with all the necessaries of life, and all the arts and appliances of industry and refinement; basking in the sunshine of peace and prosperity; guarded and protected in the enjoyment of all our rights by a wise and paternal government; ease, affluence, and security at home, respect and glory abroad; a past so full of stirring, proud recollections, a future beaming with the brightest hopes—what is there wanting to complete the happiness and renown of our nation? Every wish we could conceive in this respect seems anticipated. Ah! if man were a being of time, not of eternity; if his destiny and happiness were to be found in this world, we might answer: Nothing, nothing is wanted; we have all that a people could desire for their comfort and prosperity. Let us have peace, and with the aid of steam and electricity, and a wise, liberal government, we will make America the happiest country in the world. But no; man is not destined to attain perfect happiness in this life. If it were so, every man would attain it; no one would have griefs or meet with disappointments; those restless desires which constantly agitate the human heart would cease to disturb him, since, being formed for terrestrial happiness and enjoyment, he would rest content in the material objects which surround him. We repeat, man's lasting home is not here, and so it is that, although fortune has poured out her golden treasures on this fair land, there are hundreds, yea, thousands, who never taste her sweets, and whose lives form one continual series of human

misery. We may go still farther and enquire of those whom the world deems fortunate—the great, the rich, the renowned—if they are happy in their possessions? If candid, they will answer without exception, No! As the most beautiful rose has its thorns, so earthly felicity bears to the heart of its possessor only stings and regrets. Yes, even in fair America men are not happy, and its prosperity can afford them no permanent home, neither will its riches satisfy them, for "man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"; * and here, more than anywhere else, it seems necessary to remind him that his dwelling-place is beyond this transitory life, and that it will avail him nothing to "gain the whole world and lose his own soul." † Experience also teaches that temporal advantages and prosperity often prove more injurious than beneficial to man's salvation; for whilst few are made better by riches, many are ruined and lost for ever, since the mind, being wholly occupied in the pursuit of the perishable goods of this short life, finds it difficult to relish or pursue those which are unseen and eternal. The Holy Spirit Himself testifies to the truth of this assertion when He praises the rich man who is found without blemish. "Who is he," He asks, "and we will praise him? for he hath done wonderful things in his life." ‡ And as wonderful things are rare, so also are rich men without blemish.

But you may ask me, Is there not an abundance of the spiritual bread of the word of God scattered all over the country? There is hardly a city or village throughout the land which does not open, every Sunday, three, four, or five different churches at the

* St. Matt. iv. 4. † Ibid. xvi. 26. ‡ Ecclus. xxxi. 9.

least to accommodate its inhabitants ; and are there not hundreds of different religions to suit the most fastidious worshippers ? Have we not Bible and Tract Societies, supported chiefly by the rich, which circulate annually millions of copies of the written word of God and religious instruction all over the States of this glorious Union ? Ah ! if these church edifices were to contain, not altar against altar and teacher against teacher, but one and the same altar of which the Apostle speaks when he says, "We have an altar of which those have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle" * ; and were our numerous teachers preaching the same doctrine of the *one true faith* originally *handed down to the saints, speaking all the self-same thing*, like the primitive Christians, who, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, had all the same faith and the same baptism—not a different faith and a different or no baptism ; were they all *one*, as Christ and the Father are one—not different churches, but all belonging to the one only true Church, established by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, one flock under one shepherd ; had no one revolted, but all remained firm in the faith of Christ ; were there no divisions, no schisms, no human opinion advanced as the substitute for truth ; were the American people all living members of the one body of Jesus Christ, which is His visible Church, His visible Spouse, with a supreme visible head of her own, animated and guided by the Holy Spirit, the *Spirit of truth ;* if these numerous churches were not so many mutilated bodies without a head, so many scattered limbs without a trunk or soul ; were they all united in offering to the eternal and

* Heb. xiii. 10.

undivided Trinity that "clean oblation" spoken of by the prophet Malachi—then would the sight of those edifices fill our hearts with holy joy and exultation; then would we hail them as seats of light and not of darkness, as sources of heavenly truth and not of pernicious errors, as *tabernacles of God with men,** and not as strongholds of the spirit of darkness, who falsifies the word of God and suggests his own inventions in its stead.

O America! how much thou dost resemble in this respect pagan Rome, which thought, as St. Leo tells us, "it had adopted the greatest religion because it rejected no sort of falsehood." † There was not an idol or a superstition in the whole empire which had not its temples and votaries in Rome. It was only when the Son of God made man sent His faithful Apostles to that city, to transform it from the chief seat of error into the chief seat of divine, heavenly truth, that hell rebelled, and, for the space of three hundred years, waged the most cruel persecution to uproot and destroy, if possible, the dawning light of the Gospel. But its efforts were fruitless; it was conquered, and this proud mistress of error became the humble disciple of truth.

It is true the Constitution of the United States guarantees equal rights to all; it allows liberty of conscience to all; it even forbids Congress to frame or pass a law which might in any way interfere with the free exercise of religion. But does this annihilate the seed of religious quarrels and contentions? Does it prevent the jarring sects, no matter how fiercely opposed to each other, from uniting against

* Apoc. xxi. 3. † *Serm. i. on Nat. Apost. Peter and Paul.*

the one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church and See of St. Peter at Rome, the common centre of Christian faith and unity? Who will deny that this religious disunion is the worst evil of this otherwise prosperous and happy country, and that it would be infinitely better off if all its inhabitants were united in one religion—not a religion invented and adulterated by men's passions, but the genuine divine religion revealed and established by God Himself for the common welfare of humanity?

Oh! it is time for the enlightened American people, so intelligent in every other respect, and who have so much at heart their own and their country's welfare, to give this subject their most serious attention.

Protestantism was transplanted to American soil soon after its rise in Europe, and since the declaration of our independence it has had full liberty to expand and reach its perfection. There was nothing to retard its progress, except what it nurtured in its own bosom. In no other country in the world had it such means and opportunities of unfolding its designs and achieving its aims; and now, after a whole century of luxuriant growth in the sunlight of untrammelled liberty, we have a right to call it to an account and ask, How has it succeeded in effecting a reformation? For it was under the fascinating name of *Reformation of the true Church of Jesus Christ* that it was begun, and has been fostered even to the present day. To reform means, as everybody knows, to restore something which has lost its original perfection to its pristine state. Now, as Protestantism undertook nothing less than to reform the Church of God, we might justly expect it to pro-

duce a Church which, in point of faith and morals, should attain the full perfection of the primitive Church of the first four centuries, of which we read such edifying accounts not only in the Acts of the Apostles and the writings of the ancient Fathers, but also in those of Jewish and pagan writers.

To appeal only to Scripture testimony, we read in the Acts of the Apostles: "And they were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers"; * and again: "And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul." †

Now, whoever considers the actual state of Protestantism in our day, in this or any other country, and judges with impartiality, is forced to acknowledge that it has not *persevered in the doctrine of the Apostles*, for all the Apostles preached the same doctrine which they had learned from Jesus Christ. Hence if Protestants had persevered at all times in the doctrine of the Apostles they also would, at the present day, have but one creed and one faith; there would be no jarring sects amongst them, and no one would reject or anathematize a doctrine which another believes, reveres, and upholds as revealed by God; for truth unites, error divides. They would all be believers; no one would doubt, deny, or scoff at what the other holds sacred; they would have but *one heart* and *one soul.* As in the human heart there is but one will and affection concerning the self-same thing, which is either love or aversion; and as in the human soul there can be but one idea relating to the same thing, which contains either an affirmation or a denial; so, also,

* Acts ii. 42. † Ibid. iv. 32.

in the true Church of Jesus Christ there is but one heart and will, which is the will of God; and but one soul and idea, which is that of Christ, who has revealed and communicated to us His idea in the doctrine which He taught.

Let the defenders of Protestantism advance whatever pleas they choose in order to justify their separation from the Mother Church of Rome; all must acknowledge as an undeniable fact that truth and charity have suffered most fearfully by this separation. Instead of belief Protestantism teaches men to doubt; and instead of giving the truth at once, it sets men to search after it all their lives—"Ever learning and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth." * Instead of teaching the true meaning of God's word, it teaches human opinions about the word of God; and this, too, with perfect liberty to assent or not to assent, to have one's own private opinion about religion, so that every individual may have his own creed, if he chooses, and believe more or less of the teachings of Christ, provided he does not believe what the Catholic Church teaches, except in common with the sects. It is useless to ask a Protestant minister: "What are the doctrines of Jesus Christ?" Long ago the answer was given: "It is easier to say where they are than what they are." They will not teach people what they are to believe and to do in order to be saved, but what they are not to believe and not to do, that they may not fall into "the errors of Popery"—as if the only sin which a Christian can commit is to believe in the one holy Catholic Church! The consequence of this absurdity is a multitude of discordant sects; a

* 2 Tim. iii. 7.

multitude of conscientious persons driven almost to insanity by religious doubts and difficulties; a multitude of scoffers at all religions; and a multitude of such as profess no religion—not because they are opposed to religion, but out of respect for it, since, not being able to distinguish the true Church from the churches that are false, they hesitate to follow any one in particular through fear of falling into error. Being taught from their infancy to regard the Roman Catholic Church as a repository of all religious absurdities and abominations, they do not think it worth while, even for the sake of examination, to admit her claims as to the truth of her teaching. As the Jews of old were persuaded that "no good could come from Nazareth," * so, also, Protestants feel assured that no good can come from Rome—nay, more, many of them regard it as almost a crime to come in contact with her; and, on the other hand, when they cast their eyes on the multitude of different sects which surround them, each one professing its belief in the Bible, and each attaching a different meaning to the words of the sacred text; when they see men of talent and erudition, even men of undoubted honesty and sincerity, in almost every denomination, they may well ask with Pontius Pilate: "Quid est veritas?" (What is truth?) † But, alas! *He that is the truth* is not with the sects and gives no answer. Like Pilate, they also halt at this question, instead of enquiring where the divine truth is deposited, and where He who is "the way, the truth, and the life" promised to be "always, even to the end of the world." Oh! they do not think it worth while to pursue this, the great and only con-

* St. John i. 46. † Ibid. xviii. 38.

cern of their mortal life, but, closing their ears to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit, they turn to the enemies of truth and repeat: "No good can come from Rome." Still, all good came from Nazareth. Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, God made man, lived at Nazareth the greater part of his mortal life; and He was the truth which leads to life—the truth which Pontius Pilate was asking for; yet, though Jesus stood before him, he would not listen to Him, but went out to consult the Jews, the sworn enemies of Jesus! Oh! would to God that all those separated from the Catholic Church would lay aside their prejudice that nothing good can come from Rome. Would to God they would ask the question, "What is truth?" not of the bigoted Scribes and Pharisees, who neither entered the kingdom of God themselves—*i.e.*, the true Church of Christ—nor permitted others to enter it, but of those who can prove to full conviction that they date their mission back to Jesus Christ and His Apostles, and have, in all times and under all circumstances, faithfully fulfilled the command of the Sovereign Pastor: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature";* and again: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." †

That Protestantism has failed to accomplish what it undertook to perform is a fact which nowadays can be concealed no longer. Instead of enlightening its followers with the one holy and undivided truth, which would make them all of *one mind* and *one heart,* and make them all think and speak the self-

* St. Mark xvi. 15. † St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

same thing, it permits every one to have his own opinion about the truth, and, in consequence, introduces a confusion of ideas in matters of religion which it finds impossible to correct. Instead of "gathering together in one the children of God that were dispersed," * it tears away millions of precious souls from God's chosen family, casting them forth helpless and untaught, with no hand to guide them in their journey to eternity. The greater part of Protestant children are unbaptized, and therefore lost for ever to the cause of Christ. Instead of kindling and fostering in the hearts of its followers the fire of divine charity, Protestantism has poisoned them with the bitter hate of bigotry, so that even the best men, who desire sincerely to be kind and liberal, become exceedingly bitter when their religion is touched on. It did not work like cement, which holds together and consolidates more and more every part of the building the older it grows; but like an acid, which corrodes everything it comes in contact with, except gold. Now, here is a fact well worthy the American statesman's consideration as well as the private citizen's: It is nearly four hundred years since Protestantism was begun with the avowed object of establishing one true Church, in which divine truth and charity should reign supreme. It has enjoyed the cordial patronage of kings and princes; it has been basking in the sunshine of liberty in our own country ever since the declaration of independence; and during all this time, with so many advantages, it has produced nothing among those who followed its teaching but discord and confusion. It has set adrift on the waves of doubt and darkness count-

* St. John xi. 52.

less thousands who are entirely estranged from any Christian religion. Consider, on the other side, the Catholic Church. Established more than eighteen hundred years ago, and, notwithstanding the most violent persecutions from within and without, possessing the same divine faith, hope, and charity which were imparted to her on the day of Pentecost, she labors continually to unite all men in the bosom of the one saving faith, always cheering and supporting, by her heavenly doctrine and sacraments, the weary pilgrimage of life. Oh! when will the estimable and enlightened American people look seriously on this truth, apply this touchstone to their religious troubles and dissensions, and pronounce a fair and impartial judgment? They have the intelligence to perceive the truth, would they once seek it; but being, for the most part, engaged in commerce, farming, etc., their attention is too much engrossed with the affairs of the present life, and so they neglect those of eternity, the *one thing necessary*. Like those mentioned in the Gospel whom the king invited to his son's marriage, "they neglected, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise."* The same thing happens every day amongst us. As long as their Protestantism lets them go *their* ways they are satisfied, provided it does not lead them to public shame and disgrace, or to the Catholic Church, forgetting that Almighty God has said: "My thoughts are not your thoughts: nor your ways my ways. For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts."† Would to God that all the wealth and talent which

* St. Matt. xxii. 5. † Isaias lv. 8, 9.

are used at present to widen the breach which exists between Catholic and Protestant Christians were employed to establish union, peace, and happiness between separated brethren, fulfilling these words of the great Apostle of the Gentiles: "Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one Spirit; one Lord, one faith, one baptism"!* All one under one shepherd—not by means of physical force or the mingling of Catholic teaching with Protestant notions, but by moral suasion, the only thing capable of bringing about a sincere return of those who have been led astray from the true Church of Jesus Christ, which all are bound to hear and obey; for "he that will not hear the Church," says Christ, "let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." †

That Protestantism has erred and misled its followers is a fact which, in our enlightened nineteenth century, cannot be denied. It has failed to do what it promised, and has brought on the reverse of what it should have accomplished. Now comes its turn to retrace its steps and repair the injury done to the cause of Jesus Christ. *Errare humanum est: in errore perseverare diabolicum* (to err is human; to persevere in error is devilish). "He that is not with me," said our Blessed Lord, "is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth." ‡ Now, Protestantism has scattered long enough—only too long and too much; it is time for every sincere man to gather, and gather with Christ.

It will not justify its followers before God to say: "We all believe in Jesus Christ, we all endeavor to serve the same God—only in different ways." All

* Eph. iv. 3–5. † St. Matt. xviii. 17. ‡ Ibid. xii. 30.

that may soothe the troubled conscience for the present, but it will avail nothing on the great day of trial through which each and all of us have to pass before long, and always sooner than we imagine. There is but one way to enter into life, and a narrow way at that; for "Not every one that says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of My Father. . . . Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and cast out devils in Thy name, and done many miracles in Thy name? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity."* And truly a work of iniquity it is to rend asunder the seamless garment of Christ, His glorious Church without *spot or wrinkle;* † to lead astray millions of His flock, and to plunge them in a state of darkness far more intolerable than that in which the nations were involved before His coming. The latter doubted about the truths of natural religion, but the former doubt about the truths of divine religion. What a work of iniquity—to abolish the authority of the Church commissioned by Jesus Christ to "teach all nations," and to instigate every one who knows how to read to become his own teacher, and read and interpret the word of God as he chooses, provided he "does not hear the Church"; to replace a living authority established by God by the dead letter of the sacred Book, purposely mistranslated and mutilated to suit sectarian purposes, and to substitute the opinions of men about the divine truth for the divine truth itself! "Whosoever," says the Apostle, "revolteth, and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ,

* St. Matt. vii. 21-23. † Eph. v. 27.

hath not God."* It is not my intention to enumerate at present all the sins of Protestantism, but this much will I say: if those who began it did wrong, those who support and propagate it are not less guilty, and nothing but a sincere return to the true Church will save them from the awful and irrevocable sentence above quoted.

Nor will it do to say that all religions are good and that one is as good as another. So long as it is a certain fact that Jesus Christ taught but one religion and established but one Church, under one supreme pastor, to whom He entrusted the whole flock, every other religion and church must necessarily be a counterfeit, and consequently rejected by Almighty God. Go and tell any of our respected merchants in Wall Street, New York, that one bank-note is as good as another—no matter what the difference is, so long as it bears the name of a bank-note nothing more is required; will they believe you speak seriously, and, if so, will they believe you have your senses? Why, then, do you, men of reason and intelligence, receive and maintain as a truth in religious matters what you would reject as a cheat and nonsense in money matters? Away with all such counterfeit churches and religions! We need not legislative enactments or anything of that kind to establish the kingdom of Christ in this country. Americans of whatever creed or persuasion (I address myself in particular to the good, the noble-minded, the talented men of our nation—you in whose hands rests the destiny of our people), join hands and hearts together, put aside every prejudice against Rome and the Catholic Church, give ear to her doctrine, judge fairly and

* 2 St. John i. 9.

impartially the Church of your remotest ancestors—they were Catholics, and many of them gave up their lives in its cause ; yes, my friends, at this moment the martyr's diadem crowns their noble brows, and you shall behold them on that great day of the Lord "when death and hell shall give up their dead, and weeping and mourning shall be no more." * You shall meet them in that august assembly which no man can number, and where you also shall occupy a place if, like them, you combat faithfully under the same glorious standard ; and this glorious standard, my friends, is no other than that of the one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Rome. Examine, then, I entreat you, for the sake of your immortal souls, examine carefully, conscientiously the many claims which this Church has to your submission, your esteem, and your gratitude. She alone has the glory of being founded by Jesus Christ and His Apostles. She has for her security His infallible promise that He is with her "all days, even to the consummation of the world." She is His Spouse, ever subject to Him—His only one, His body, His kingdom, His reward for all He did and suffered. She stands before you to-day as a tender mother that has been cruelly slandered and calumniated, in order to estrange from her the lost children of her affection ; destined, like her Divine Founder, to drink the bitter chalice of suffering and persecution, to feel the angry waves of hell's threatening fury dash against her, though without power to overthrow her, but destined likewise—oh ! never forget it—to partake of His joy and bliss in heaven. Here, then, is the rightful mother of your souls, whose arms are at all times

* Apoc. xx. 13, xxi. 4.

extended to receive you, that she may bear you in safety to your eternal rest. A child who has been unjustly torn from the parental home by some designing person, though too young at the time to understand its loss, will afterwards, if warned by friendly authority, do all in its power to ascertain the truth as long as there is an opportunity of doing so. Now, there is no Protestant who does not know that his ancestors were Catholics, yet very few there are who know by what means and what injustice they have been wrested from the heart of their mother Church. A fair and impartial history of these events has never come into their hands.

We come, therefore, not to ask favors for the Catholic Church, but as an humble servant whom the "Great King" sends to invite you to His kingdom. Ah! yes; and we come also as a friend who has your happiness at heart, and who loves each dear soul as the fond mother loves her cherished first-born. Many of you who read my feeble words will never meet me till the last great day, when you will recognize me as the lowly instrument which your Heavenly Father employed to direct your sincere and yearning hearts to the infallible "Bark of Peter," where peace and salvation awaited you. Go to work, then, in God's name, for the dismal night of death approaches, in which no man can work; make good use of the precious time which yet remains; examine attentively the teachings of the Catholic Church. We ask no more than a fair, impartial trial and judgment, such as no honorable American would deny the greatest criminal.

It is not my purpose in the present little treatise to vindicate the claims of the Catholic Church

on historical grounds, as there are numerous and excellent works of that description to be found in every Catholic bookstore; nor do I see any necessity for appealing to human testimony in order to justify the truth and divine character of Holy Church. Americans, thank God! love the Bible; they respect and revere it, and I am happy to be able to show in the following pages that no other but the Holy Roman Catholic Church, as it was and as it is, can claim to be the Church of the Bible. The impartial reader will, therefore, be amazed to see how clearly the constant tradition of the Church illustrates the texts I have undertaken to explain, and how many things beautifully represented in Scripture as belonging to this Church are rejected by the so-called Reformers, though drawn and ordained by the master-hand of our Divine Redeemer Himself. Like a wise architect, He planned His Church before He built it. He gave us sketches representing it from different points of view. He depicted her exterior and interior appearance, sometimes giving even the most minute details, so that we have only to compare these drawings of our Divine Master in order to distinguish the true Church from her counterfeits. This He did particularly in His parables, which are nothing but plain, simple stories, easily remembered by plain, simple people, even without learning or talent. In these He clothed His divine doctrines, and adapted them to the capacities of His humblest auditors, taking His illustrations from those common and obvious objects with which they were most familiar, screening the Divine Mysteries at the same time from the ill-disposed and bigoted who listened to the parables but would not under-

stand their meaning. Hence when the Apostles came and said to Him, "Why speakest thou to them in parables?" He answered them, "Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven."* They were to know them not merely for their own benefit, but for that of those also whom they were hereafter to teach and instruct. But to them—viz., the Scribes and Pharisees, and bigoted Jews, who listened not as persons anxious to be instructed, but that they might mock and criticise the sacred words that fell from the lips of Jesus—"to them it is not given. For he that hath, to him shall be given: but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath. Therefore do I speak to them in parables: because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."† Hence we find in the Gospel that whenever the Apostles seemed not to understand, or to misunderstand, the real meaning of His words, He never failed to explain the subject to them, though He did not do so before the multitude, because of the evil-minded persons amongst them. This is why some of the parables are explained, whilst others are not; for when the Apostles were sufficiently instructed concerning the mysteries of which He spoke in the parables, they needed no explanation, but at once understood their real meaning: "For to them it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven."‡ It was therefore enough for our Divine Lord to relate those parables to the common people without giving an explanation; they could learn that afterwards, when the divinely-appointed teachers—

* St. Matt. xiii. 10. † Ibid. xiii. 12, 13. ‡ Ib. xiii. 11.

viz., the Apostles and their successors—commenced to exercise their ministry, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded them." *

The Bible tells us it was given to the Apostles to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven either in parables or plain words. If that was so (and who will doubt it ?), who has it now ? And to whom is it given, if not to their legitimate successors, who were to continue the work which the Apostles had begun, even to the consummation of ages ?

If, then, the kind reader of these pages finds in them a more accurate, faithful, and thorough explanation of our Lord's parables than he ever received from any sectarian preacher, let him bear in mind that the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church are the legitimate and only true successors of those to whom the Saviour said: "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

I have selected for exposition only those of the parables that relate to Catholic dogmas controverted by the sects, and I pass over those which contain only lessons of morality never impugned or denied by any one bearing the name of Christian, at least in theory. I must confess, also, that my attention was drawn to this subject by reading the Essays of His Eminence Cardinal Wiseman wherein he treats of the parables. I have taken them as the subject of my discourses in many places, and the great popularity which they obtained among Catholics and Protestants affords me sufficient hope that, when printed and published in book-form, they may contribute in bringing to the

* St. Matt. ult.

path of truth, which leads to life everlasting, many whom my feeble words could never reach, provided they not only love to read, but also to follow, what the Bible teaches.

While penning these lines there came into my hands a new edition of an old German pamphlet, printed in 1736, entitled *Der Katholische Lutheraner* (The Catholic Lutheran), in which the author, quoting Luther's own words from the original editions of his works, irrefragably proves that, without departing one hair's-breadth from Luther's teaching, a Lutheran Protestant may adopt the Catholic religion. To explain this paradox I must state that whoever peruses Luther's writings, from beginning to end, will find that there is not a single point of Catholic doctrine which he denies or attacks in one place which he does not defend or assert in some other part of his works; and learned men, judging Luther impartially from his own writings, agree in the verdict that if Luther was not actually insane, at least from time to time, he never believed fully in his own teaching, and in his heart was always convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion. They distinguish between Luther the Reformer and Luther the private Christian. As a Reformer, in the heat of excitement, especially when attacked by his Catholic opponents, he shrank from attacking or denying no point of doctrine which, in his calmer moments, as a private individual or in controversy with non-Catholic rivals, he maintained and defended. These quotations from Luther I have added in notes wherever an opportunity presented itself, for the benefit of those who would rather believe what Luther the great Reformer himself believed than what he *taught* in his new Gospel.

With respect to style and language, I have followed the same method which I endeavor to follow in public preaching—viz., to speak *plainly* and *simply*, so as to enable even the most illiterate to understand me. Learned and unlearned understand plain talk, but high-flown language is often not understood by the latter. They are the lambs of Christ's flock, and consequently must be nourished with the bread of instruction as well as the learned, since there is no respect of persons before God.

Should this work fall into the hands of any person desirous to see it in better style or language, I beg of him, if he is a man seeking the glory of God and the true happiness of America, to rewrite it in his own style; and if he provides our Catholics and non-Catholics with a better book on the subject, we shall thank him exceedingly, and praise and bless God for His goodness towards us. "*To Him be glory both now and unto the day of eternity. Amen.*" *

2 St. Peter iii. 18.

SECTION I.

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him: and having wounded him went away leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way: and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came near him: and seeing him was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine: and setting him upon his own beast brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him: and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee."—St. Luke x. 30 to 35.

CHAPTER I.

FALLEN MAN REPRESENTED UNDER THE FIGURE OF THE WOUNDED TRAVELLER.

WE read in the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to St. Luke that, on a certain occasion when our Divine Saviour was engaged in instructing His disciples, a lawyer, or doctor of the divine law, was present, and, astonished by the sublime lessons of wisdom and knowledge which flowed from the lips of Jesus, as well as troubled, fearing the supe-

rior gifts of intellect which he discovered in the new Teacher should eclipse his own talents and learning, and no longer able to control the envious spirit that possessed him, he determined to interrupt the beautiful discourse by asking a question. The Scripture says he "stood up tempting Him." Here it is evident from the word *tempt* that he had no good motive in asking the question, his object being to try to embarrass our Lord by some subtle questions, which he could do with a human creature like himself, and thus have an occasion to display his "little" learning, which had acquired for him the title of "doctor of the divine law," and which was not sufficient to save himself, much less to save others. He was convinced that he knew everything, like many of our modern divines, who cannot believe in the infallibility of the Church, because they would have to cease to believe in their own infallibility; he had nothing to learn, but he *pretended* not to know. Like Satan himself, and every other tempter and seducer, he had a question to ask: "Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?" Our Saviour, who read his thoughts, made him answer his own question by saying, "What is written in the law"; as if He said, Are you not sufficiently instructed to know what the law requires? Mortified by the rebuke, he proposed another question, and the holy Gospel tells us expressly why he did so—*that he might justify himself.* In answer to this latter our Divine Lord related the above beautiful parable, from which this doctor of divinity only gathered the simple truth that all men were his neighbors, while he failed to discover the great and important mysteries that were thus veiled from his malicious gaze, and the meaning of which it was

not given him to understand, for the reason that he was not sincere with Almighty God. Even in our own day it is a remarkable truth that men who are not sincere in seeking the truth are never done asking questions; and even if you silence them, as our Divine Lord did on this occasion, you have reason to doubt whether you have convinced them. "Seeing they see not, neither do they understand," for immediately after they will speak and act as if you had never said a word about the truth in their hearing. The ancients used to say of such, "Non persuadebis etiamsi persuaseris" (you will not persuade them, even if you persuade); and St. Paul says, "The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God: for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand: because it is spiritually examined."* The lawyer who tempted our Lord was one of those sensual men; hence all he learned from the parable of the good Samaritan was the plain truth that every man, without distinction of creed or nationality, is our neighbor, whom we are bound to love as ourselves. This was enough, and more than enough, for him. Whether he afterwards loved the Samaritans, who differed from him in religion, *as well as himself* we cannot say; but let us hope he did, and return to examine the beautiful picture drawn by our Divine Saviour on that occasion "for our learning." It is one of the "things that are of the Spirit of God," and, if "spiritually examined," we shall find the fall of our first parents, the helpless condition of the human race until the coming of Christ, the efficacy of the holy sacraments, the Church and the fulness of power granted to the Pope, as Vicar of Jesus Christ,

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

for the salvation of mankind, all clearly represented in this parable. It would be a grievous mistake were we to suppose that the parables and sayings of Jesus Christ recorded in the Gospel had reference merely to those persons whom He addressed at the time; "for what things soever were written, were written for our learning."* Hence it is that those to whom "it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," the members of the true Church of Christ well instructed in their religion, find a vast deal more of information in the sacred text than those without, to whom "it is not given, because seeing they see not, hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."

We shall now proceed to examine the first part of our parable: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho." Jerusalem is interpreted "the *city* of peace." And such was the terrestrial paradise wherein God placed man in a state of trial after his creation; and such also is our future heavenly home, which we shall reach as conquerors if we be faithful to our God during the combats and trials of this short life. When God created man, man was at peace with his Creator, with himself, and with the outward world. He would never have been deprived of this happy condition, had he himself not turned away.

Jericho was one of the principal cities of the promised land, and the chief seat of the idolatrous worship of the country. When Josue approached at the head of God's chosen people, bearing the ark of the covenant, in presence of this emblem of the future Church to be established by the Messias the strong ramparts

*Rom. xv. 4.

and fortifications of Jericho crumbled into dust, and thenceforth it became the chief seat of the priesthood which Moses and Aaron had founded by the command of God. It was called the "City of Palms,"* and it is also recorded that a considerable trade in balsam was carried on there.

Going from Jerusalem to Jericho in a downward direction denotes the fall or change from a state of perfection and close union with God, without pain or combat, to a state where perfection and salvation can only be obtained and the enemy defeated by vigilant and constant warfare under the aid and guidance of the priests of the Church, the true ark of the covenant, the mystical sanctuary and habitation of God with men, together with the application of healing balsam used by the priesthood for the cure of our spiritual wounds. When man of his own free will left his first happy state by which Divine Providence wished to lead him to spiritual perfection, there was a second state reserved for him by the mercy of God, that he might not perish altogether.

"He fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and, having wounded him, went away leaving him half dead." Our Saviour calls the devil "a murderer from the beginning";† hence these robbers were demons of hell, who, envying the happy state of man in the terrestrial paradise, succeeded in seducing him to fall away from God. As long as he was faithful to God he stood; when he turned away from God by disobedience he fell, and "fell among robbers, who also stripped him." This supposes that he was clothed and adorned with the choicest gifts superadded to the gifts of nature; for he was also

* Deut. xxxiv. 3. † St. John viii. 44.

wounded in his natural faculties, and left in a state of utter inability to raise himself up either to go to Jerusalem or Jericho. Behold here the Catholic doctrine about the fall of man and his condition immediately after the fall.

In order to create man it was not necessary that God should bestow on him any more particular gifts than a human soul endowed with intellect, memory, and will, and a human body such as we brought into the world when we were born. A human body and a human soul constitute the nature of man, and this was all man could claim in order to be a man. But if this alone were sufficient for man, it was not so for an infinitely good and liberal God. As man was to be the masterpiece of God's visible creation, the connecting link of the natural with the supernatural world, and so truly the child of God's love and goodness, the Almighty did not fail to lavish on him the most precious gifts of nature and grace suitable to his condition and final destination. The first and chief among these was His divine grace, which at once raises man above the rank of mere natural beings, and, as St. Peter says, makes him a "partaker of the divine nature";* hence we read from the beginning: "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth: and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul."† That there is more than the mere natural life to be understood here is evident from the use of the expression, "a living soul"—otherwise the word *living* would be quite superfluous; for a soul, to be a soul, must be living a natural life. But it may live a natural life and be dead supernaturally, being de-

* 2 St. Peter i. 4. † Gen. ii. 7.

prived of the grace of God, which in holy Scripture is called life—"life everlasting"; "If thou wilt enter into life"; * and again: "He that believeth in me hath everlasting life." † Hence, also, it is said: "Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor." ‡ Now, *honor* and *glory,* strictly speaking, are due to "God alone"; § yet when God conferred His divine grace upon man, and thereby made him partaker of His divine nature, "He crowned him with honor and glory." Moreover, it is said that God made man to "His own image and likeness." ‖ The holy Fathers of the Church explain this in the following manner: The *image* of God consists in the three natural powers of the soul, intellect, memory, and will; the *likeness* is effected by the grace of God superadded to these three natural gifts. As a painter who desires to represent a person on canvas will give a sufficiently distinct image of the one to be represented by drawing the outlines, so Almighty God, in giving to the human soul intellect, memory, and will, made it an image of Himself. Then, as a skilful artist, wishing to give his work a greater perfection, is not satisfied with merely drawing the outlines, but makes use also of brush and paint, and every line he draws with them makes the image more like to him whom he represents—in other words, he improves the likeness—so also our merciful and all-wise Creator was not satisfied with bestowing on the human soul only the natural powers of intellect, memory, and will as His image; He wanted this image to be more and more like Himself, and therefore added the gift of

* St. Matt. xix. 17. † St. John vi. 47. ‡ Ps. viii. 6.
§ 1 Tim. i. 17. ‖ Gen. i. 26.

divine grace, that, by co-operating with this grace, we might deserve other graces, partake more and more of the *divine nature*, and be *gods* and *sons of the "Most High."* As a tender and virtuous father rejoices exceedingly to see his children, as they advance in years, developing each day not only a resemblance of his own features, but also of his character and virtues, so also the Lord God rejoiced in man, whom He had made to His own image and likeness, when He saw him progressing in wisdom and grace. But, although the grace of God is the highest and choicest gift which His goodness can bestow on a creature, it was not the only supernatural gift conferred on man at his creation. The Bible tells us: "He created in them the science of the spirit, he filled their heart with wisdom, and showed them both good and evil."* From this we learn that Adam did not come forth from the hands of his Creator in that state of utter ignorance in which we are born, for "He created in them the science of the spirit"—*i.e.*, their spirit and mind were replenished with an amount of science which they had not labored to acquire by the exertion of their mental faculties, as we are obliged to do at present, but which was created with the spirit, and therefore supernaturally infused into their minds. How vast this knowledge must have been we can infer from the single fact that Adam was able instantly, at first sight, to call everything by its proper name; for we read in the book of Genesis: "And the Lord God having formed out of the ground all the beasts of the earth, and all the fowls of the air, brought them to Adam to see what he would call them: for whatsoever Adam called any living crea-

* Ecclus. xvii. 6.

ture, the same is its name." * Now, it would not be its proper name if it did not fully express the nature and end of that creature to which it was given; and Adam never could have given to every living thing its appropriate name unless he thoroughly understood its nature. Plato, the great philosopher, has said that "he was the wisest man who could call everything by its name." Well, such a man was Adam. There never was another like him, except the adorable person of Jesus Christ. Moreover, this supernatural, and therefore divine, knowledge secured him against *error*. For error consists in attributing to a thing a property which does not belong to it. Though Adam did not know all things (he was not omniscient), yet he made no mistake regarding the things which he did know. Error only entered his mind when he sinned. Here we find that besides the first and chief gift of God, His divine grace, there was a second supernatural gift imparted to man—viz., an infallible, divine, infused knowledge free from mistakes and errors.

"He filled their heart with wisdom, and showed them both good and evil." † The human heart is considered as the seat of the affections and volitions. A heart is wise when its longings and desires are regulated and controlled by reason; but it is a foolish heart when it discards reason and gives its desires unbridled liberty. When, therefore, holy Scripture says that God filled the hearts of our first parents with wisdom, it thereby teaches that there was no such conflict between man's spiritual and carnal nature as at present in our fallen state, and which the Apostle St. Paul describes to us in these words:

* Gen. ii. 19. † Ecclus. xvii. 6.

"The flesh lusteth against the spirit: and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another." * Hence, while man remained faithful to God his superior powers had perfect control over his inferior nature; the body was subject to the spirit, and the spirit obeyed its Creator.

This perfect subordination of man's inferior nature to the superior powers of the soul was a third supernatural gift granted by God to our first parents; by this they were capable of exercising absolute control over their passions. And although man's body was formed from the slime of the earth, composed of various substances naturally liable to a chemical process of decomposition that would cause pain and death, yet, by a special privilege of Almighty God, he was exempt from pain and death as long as he obeyed the will of his Creator; and that will was made known to him in this simple command: "Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death." † Finally, he was placed in a *paradise of pleasure;* and we may imagine, or rather we cannot conceive, what a delightful paradise this was when the Almighty Himself planted it for no other purpose than that of being a *paradise of pleasure.*

Not to speak of other advantages derived from this happy condition, we see that, besides the attributes of human nature, Almighty God, in His infinite goodness and liberality, adorned and perfected man with five supernatural privileges by no means due to his nature, but superadded to the gifts of nature: 1st, divine grace, or supernatural life of the soul, by means of which he lived (though still on earth)

* Gal. v. 17. † Gen. ii. 17.

for heaven; 2d, supernatural knowledge, not acquired, but infused into him at his creation; 3d, perfect submission of the inferior man to the superior, of the body to the soul; 4th, impassibility, or exemption from all pain and sorrow; 5th, immortality of the body as well as of the soul, if the latter persevered in the supernatural life of grace.

Now to return to our parable. When man turned from God *and fell among robbers*, they stripped him of all these supernatural gifts and robbed him of them. They also "wounded him, and went away leaving him half dead." No sooner had man sinned than he lost the beautiful robe of sanctifying grace with which his benign Creator had adorned him on the day of his creation. "For what participation hath justice with injustice? or what fellowship hath light with darkness?" * Adam and Eve were, as the seducer said, like the *gods;* not like the God of heaven and earth, but like those who wanted to be *gods* and became *devils.* Like them they were deprived of their supernatural life and beauty, and, desirous to be gods, were instantly cast down from their place of honor to a state of degradation and misery. "The science of the spirit" created in them, exempting them from error, at once gave way to human opinion, which begot doubt, ignorance, and error; and as the soul revolted against God, so the body revolted against the soul. Shameful passions arose; they became aware that they were naked, whereas before, as St. Augustine says, holy innocence had clothed them; and from that moment out they were liable to labor, sufferings, and death. They died the death of the soul on the spot and at the very

* 2 Cor. vi. 14.

moment they consented to sin, for they lost the grace of God, which is the supernatural life of the soul ; from that instant the body, no longer immortal, was destined to perish and to return to the earth from which it was taken, there to sleep, amid the horrors of the grave, till the end of ages, when the sound of the archangel's trumpet shall summon it from its unbroken slumber.

But these infernal robbers who seduced man not only *stripped* him of all supernatural gifts, but also *wounded* him. After being despoiled of every supernatural gift he was wounded in his nature, in soul and body. To the nature of the soul belong intellect, memory, and will. The intellect was darkened. What obscurity and darkness already hovered over his mind when Adam thought he could hide himself from the Almighty behind the trees of paradise, and excuse himself by accusing another ! His memory was weakened ; he almost forgot that he was speaking to an omniscient God, who was present at the time and place of the transgression : " All their works are as the sun in the sight of God." * His will was inclined to evil, for Adam willed evil to Eve when he tried to excuse himself, and to throw upon her alone the responsibility of a crime which he himself had committed. His body also became subject to infirmities, disease, and death.

But if man's nature was thus enfeebled by sin, yet he was not so entirely depraved as to be destitute of all good. Man was *wounded* and left *half dead*, but not entirely crushed and destroyed. Although he had lost the grace of God and those other supernatural privileges mentioned above, there remained to him

* Ecclus. xvii. 16.

still the gifts of nature; and if these were also impaired, they were not altogether dead: there was yet a faint breath of life remaining, which imparted to him the semblance of life. And this faint life, though in great danger of death unless speedy help be afforded, is still something good; it is the natural life of man without the sanctifying grace of God. Therefore, if man is unable to help himself in this state, *he is* (not, indeed, by his own natural powers, but assisted by divine grace) *at least able to call for help*, and to accept proper treatment, when offered, for his recovery. Intellect, memory, and will, though much impaired by sin, are still the gifts of God, and good in themselves, as far as they are capable of going, when not abused; and as long as there is life there is always room for hope of recovery. It is true that man after sinning, and as long as he continues in the state of sin, is incapable of performing any good action deserving a *heavenly reward.* A supernatural end can only be obtained by supernatural means; natural means alone are not sufficient. Nevertheless he can perform many naturally good actions, which may move God to mercy and obtain for him the grace of conversion, and consequently sanctifying grace, which is his supernatural life.

To say that a man in the state of sin can perform no good action whatever, and that all, even his best, actions are sins as long as he is not converted, is an absurdity, not to say a blasphemy against an infinitely just and merciful God; for, were that the case, the best thing for the sinner to do would be to perform no good action at all, since, according to this doctrine, he would sin in doing good, and he would also sin by

omitting to do good; consequently he will be lost whether he does good or not. In that state even conversion would imply sin; for, in order to be converted, he must read or hear the word of God; he must meditate and reflect on it; he must believe it and resolve to obey it; he must repent for his past sins; he is obliged to repair, as much as he can, the evil which he has caused by his sins; he must pray and ask the assistance of God's grace, without which we can do nothing. All these are good actions, which are necessary to constitute a true conversion; but if all his good actions are sins, these good actions that are to bring about his conversion are also sins. Hence he is not allowed to commit sin, neither is he permitted to think of conversion; there is no alternative left to shield the poor soul from destruction. Oh! what a truly *damnable* religion. How in the name of common sense is it possible that such an impious and ridiculous doctrine should find a majority of believers in our enlightened country? There are few Methodist or Baptist ministers, not to speak of many amongst other denominations of Protestants, who do not teach that all the good works a man performs, as long as he is not converted, are sins. How infinitely more rational and consoling is the teaching of the Catholic Church in this respect, as above stated! Though man may be stripped of every supernatural gift—for it is certain when he commits mortal sin he loses divine charity—he may still retain divine faith and hope, unless he sin against these also; he may be *wounded* in his natural faculties, but he is not as yet irreparably lost, as are the damned in hell. The good Samaritan may still rekindle the spiritual life; for, as the Scripture says, "The bruised reed he

shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not extinguish." *

By sin man was left *half dead* on the journey of this life, which is his way to salvation or perdition; in this sad condition he cannot help himself, or regain his former state, without the assistance of some saving hand. He himself can fall and disobey God, but return to Him he cannot without assistance. And from whom shall he seek this help, and who can afford it, we shall see in the following pages.

CHAPTER II.

JESUS CHRIST, THE REDEEMER, REPRESENTED BY THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

"And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way: and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by."—St. Luke x. 31, 32.

ACCORDING to the literal sense of the above text, this *certain priest* was a Jewish priest, who, in obedience to the law, had served his turn in the temple of Jerusalem and was on his way home to Jericho; in the same manner also the Levite, who belonged to an order of clergy inferior to the priests, and whose duty it was to assist the priests in offering the sacrifices which the law prescribed. Here we have represented, in a mystical sense, the Jewish priesthood with its levitical rites and ceremonies, established by God, through Moses, as a temporary institution to last only till the coming of the Messias. Neither had these Jewish priests and levites

* St. Matt. xii. 20.

any power to restore fallen man; they went the same way from Jerusalem to Jericho; they came near the place only to see and testify that man was fallen and needed a redeemer; consequently, all the sacrifices of the old law from the very beginning of the world were but types and figures of that atoning sacrifice which Jesus Christ, the God-man, once offered on Calvary in a bloody manner, and continues to offer daily in the unbloody sacrifice of the new law, according to those words of the prophet: "From the rising of the sun to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation." * So, also, the Jewish priesthood, with its ancient rites, was destined to give place to the priests of the great "High-Priest according to the order of Melchisedech," † therefore they passed by; for, although established by God, they were not a permanent institution, but awaited a sovereign and truly efficacious one, capable of imparting health and salvation to poor fallen man left wounded and half dead on the wayside.

"But a certain Samaritan being on his journey came near him; and seeing him, was moved with compassion." On one occasion the Jews, blaspheming our Saviour, said to Him: "Do we not say well, that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?" Here they made two charges against Him—1st, that He was a Samaritan; and, 2d, that He had a devil. He cleared Himself of the latter charge, saying: "I have not a devil, but I honor My Father, and you have dishonored Me"; ‡ but He does not deny the first. The Samaritans differed

* Mal. i. 11. † Ps. cix. 5. ‡ St. John viii. 49.

from the rest of the Jews in one point of doctrine: maintaining that the Lord God was to be worshipped on Mount Garizim, which was near their city, Samaria; whereas the Jews maintained that only in their temple at Jerusalem could God be offered an acceptable worship. This religious difference had at length reached a state of fanatical bigotry on both sides; so much so that even the Samaritan woman at Jacob's fountain was astonished that Jesus should ask her for a drink of water. "How dost thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman? For the Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans." * Our Saviour not refuting the charge of being a Samaritan, insinuated thereby that He was to be the founder of a new religion, which would teach men to worship God, not in Jerusalem alone or on the mountain, but everywhere "in spirit and in truth" †—*i.e.*, in the Holy Spirit that would animate His Church and live in every member thereof, "asking for us," as the Apostle says, "with unspeakable groanings"; ‡ "and in truth"—that is, Christ Jesus, our adorable sacrifice, which is the only true mode of worshipping God. The Samaritan did not ask the wounded man whether he was a Samaritan, or a Jew, or a Gentile; independent of all such motives, he performs an act of charity. By this our Divine Lord teaches that charity, to be true charity, must be universal—that is catholic; if it makes distinctions on account of kindred or nationality, even of religion, it no longer deserves the name of charity: for to exclude any one who is needy, under such a pretext, is truly uncharitable.

* St. John iv. 9. † Ibid. iv. 24. ‡ Rom. viii. 26.

Hence you may speak of Protestant faith, Protestant hope, but there is no such thing as Protestant charity; for if charity protests it is no more charity but the opposite. True charity is essentially catholic.

"But a certain Samaritan being on his journey came near him." The life of Jesus Christ, the good Samaritan, on earth was only a journey, like our own existence. He came from the Father and lived in this world thirty-three years, then returned to the Father. Like ourselves, he had not here a lasting city, but when He came He came as near to fallen man as only a God made man could come. He took upon Himself our fallen nature with all its infirmities, sin only excepted. "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man." *

"And seeing him, was moved with compassion." What was it He saw? What moved Him to compassion? Was it the brightness of man's intellect, the sagacity of his judgment, the keenness of his perceptions, the clearness and force of his reason, the perfection of his heart and sensibilities, his unspotted morality, and all the perfections of humanity, which we hear so magnificently extolled by many preachers in their pulpits, to supersede divine faith altogether? Oh! no. He saw the pitiful state into which sin had plunged the human race; and this excessive misery, which no one could fathom better than Himself, *moved Him to compassion.* He saw man stripped of the sanctifying grace of God, that nuptial garment of

* Phil. ii. 7.

heavenly innocence without which no one can be admitted to the nuptials of the Lamb. "For nothing defiled can enter heaven." * He saw him stripped of all those supernatural gifts wherewith his Creator endowed him, without any means on his part to recover them. He saw how man, wounded in his natural faculties, plunged into the grossest errors, out of which his natural reason—which was obscured—with his weakened memory and perverted will could never extricate him. An experience of four thousand years proved beyond doubt that natural reason, left to itself, was unable to establish with certitude even those religious truths which belong to its sphere, and which, absolutely speaking, it could have discovered had it never been biassed by prejudice or passion. God permitted human reason to err for the space of four thousand years, in order to convince this proud faculty of the soul that it was morally insufficient of itself and needed light from above. "For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that He may have mercy on all" †—that is, He found all nations, both Jews and Gentiles, in a state of unbelief, not by His causing, but by an abuse of their own free will, so that their calling is purely owing to His mercy.

"And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine." Jesus Christ, the good Samaritan, did not come in the same direction as the wounded man, from Jerusalem to Jericho—He never fell. "For it was fitting that we should have such a High-Priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and higher than the heavens." ‡

* Apoc. xxi. 27. † Rom. xi. 32. ‡ Heb. vii. 26.

"Going up to him." This supposes that He was lower than him; and, in fact, though "higher than the heavens," He *emptied* Himself, and in habit was found as a man. "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross." * He humbled Himself that He might come as near as possible to fallen man. When man sinned he lowered himself beneath the condition of the irrational animals. "When man was in honor he did not understand: he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them." † Hence it is that we find the good Samaritan, at His entrance on the journey of this life, placed in a stable between two beasts of burden. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel hath not known Me." ‡ Yes, He, the Lord of glory, appears among the beasts of burden, in order to raise man from his degraded condition to the happy state of a child of God from which he had fallen. He *humbled Himself* to the lowest to raise us to the highest. He occupied the lowliest place at His entrance into the world—for there could not be a lowlier place than the crib in a stable between two animals; and He took the last place at His death, the place of public execution, being crucified between two thieves, as the most guilty—for "the first of this world shall be last, and the last shall be first"; and if, like our Divine Lord, we humble ourselves, like Him, too, we shall be exalted.

"He bound up his wounds." If these wounds were left unbound man would bleed to death. This binding up is of absolute necessity. But what is meant by

* Phil. ii. 7, 8. † Ps. xlviii. 13, 21. ‡ Isaias i. 3.

it? We have seen that these wounds were inflicted upon the natural faculties of the soul. The intellect was wounded, and bled errors during four thousand years; the memory was wounded, for it was weakened, and retained sensual and sinful impressions much more easily than spiritual and holy ideas; the will was wounded, for it was inclined to evil, refused to obey, and followed the impulse of its own evil inclinations rather than the dictates of reason and the holy will of God. Jesus Christ, the good Samaritan, binds up these wounds when He binds the intellect, that restless faculty, to submit to faith and to believe the truth which He teaches, whether this limited intellect understands it or not. It must be sufficient for every created intellect to know that *God said so* to oblige it to comply—not only not to contradict the assertion, but not even to doubt what God says. Would to God our non-Catholic brethren would bear in mind this truth and give it their utmost attention! This would put an end to their vaunted privilege of private interpretation of the word of God. All right of discussion about the truth is confined to the simple question whether God said so or not, and not if this or that doctrine of Christ is true, or how it is to be explained in order to be understood; for if God said so it must be true, and even if I cannot explain how it is so, nevertheless it must be true when God has said so. Hence we see throughout the Gospels that Jesus Christ makes use of proofs and reasonings only when there is question about His divinity or His divine mission; but whenever He proposes a new doctrine of His own, a "mystery of the kingdom of heaven," He changes His language completely, and says, "Amen, amen, I say

to you." * He explains what He means, but demands implicit *belief*. He does not reason and argue on the subject; the fact that He, the Son of God, says so must be sufficient. And even if "many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him," He let them go, and when a voice was heard to say, "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" He turns towards His Apostles and says: "Will you also go away?" † He would have dismissed them also, had they not professed their faith in the words of St. Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." ‡ He knew well that all men have not intellect enough to understand and follow arguments, and that even men of the keenest intellect and the brightest intelligence are liable to go astray in their reasonings; but He knew at the same time that all men are capable of believing what God says, no matter whether they understand it or not. In this manner He binds the intellect to believe His doctrine; He stops the bleeding and cures the fatal *error*. He binds the intellect to the truth by the ties of moral obligation, and commands it to abide by it; and reason, knowing that God said so, and, therefore, that it is certain truth, is satisfied and errs no more, thus "bringing into captivity every created understanding to the obedience of Christ." § In the same way the memory of man is bound to learn the teachings of Christ as the doctrine of salvation, by means of which it is supplied with a fund of useful knowledge and holy thoughts, which prevent false ideas

* St. John iii. 5. † Ibid. vi. 68. ‡ Ibid. 69, 70. § 2 Cor. x. 5.

and sinful thoughts, so destructive to man's happiness both here and hereafter.

The will also, though corrupt and inclined to evil, is bound up by the law of Jesus Christ and His holy Church, being strengthened to observe this divine law by prayer, the word of God, and, more than all, by the holy sacraments, the principal sources of heavenly grace.

Here I may be allowed to say a few words in particular to sincere and well-meaning Protestants who are not careless about their salvation or indifferent with regard to truth. No matter how strictly you may consider your will bound by the commandments of God, no matter how much you feel bound to read the Bible and store your memory with its contents, your soul is still wounded and bleeding, and will remain so as long as you do not believe all and everything which Christ has taught, and which the Holy Catholic Church, established by Him to teach all nations, shall believe and teach to the end of time. But some will laugh at and scorn the idea of binding their will to the firm belief of a certain creed; they prefer the fatal liberty to form their own opinion about divine truth, and to differ not only from the Catholic Church, but also from those of their own denomination. They admit that the word of God is infallible, or, in other words, that God is truth, and therefore cannot lie. Let them open their Bible and read from the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew, verse 18: "I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." See here the infallibility of the Church; and again, from the concluding chapter and verse of the same Evange-

list: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." We also read from the same Gospel, at the seventeenth verse of the eighteenth chapter: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."

Now, I ask, can any man of sense who admits the Bible to be the word of God read the sacred texts I have just quoted and not adhere to or embrace the Catholic religion? Here are the words of Christ; and will man, the child of dust, the being of nothingness, whom He could crush with a mere glance—will he, I repeat, have the audacity to contradict his Maker? Alas! the awful fact is too true of those numerous sects that pretend to follow the teachings of the Bible. All, all are guilty of gainsaying their Creator, their Redeemer, and their Judge. He has said the powers of hell shall not prevail against the Church of Peter and his successors, and they cry out, in the face of heaven and earth: It is true Christ said these words, but He did not keep His promise; that hell did prevail against the Church; and that, after a few hundred years, Christ, her founder, had abandoned her. He was not with her any more, though the *consummation of ages* was not yet come. It was no longer an obligation *to hear the Church*, for the promises made to her by the Almighty had failed, though God Almighty Himself declared that "heaven and earth shall pass away, but His word would not pass away."

Thus any well-disposed person who reflects on the above texts will at once be convinced that, as sure as God is God, the Church did not err, cannot err, and never will err—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Were it otherwise, then the word of God

could not be relied on, to assert which would be blasphemy and absurdity. The Church, then, is infallible in what she teaches, because God is infallible, and demands from all her children a firm and unalterable belief in all and every article of faith,* from the days of her Divine Founder to the present time, and will continue so till the end of ages, according to the promises of Christ; "thus bringing into captivity not only memory and will, but also every created understanding unto the obedience of Christ." We therefore obey with intellect, memory, and will, whilst you offer but the memory and will, reserving to yourselves the understanding or intellect, the noblest portion of the soul!

CHAPTER III.

JESUS CHRIST THE GOOD SAMARITAN—CONTINUED.

"POURING in oil and wine." Oil and wine are mentioned here as remedies for the wounds inflicted on fallen man; not balsam or any other substance naturally better adapted for healing bodily wounds. The reason of this choice of remedies is more appropriately explained by the mystical sense of the parable than by the literal sense. That by the

* Here are Luther's own words on this subject, quoted from his *Kurzen Bekenntniss vom heiligen Sacrament* (Short Treatise on the Holy Sacrament), written in the year 1544: "Darumb heissts rund und rein, gantz und alles geglaubt, oder nichts geglaubt. Der heilige Geist lässt sich nicht trennen, noch theilen, dass er ein Stück solt wahrhaftig, und das andere falsch lehren, oder glauben." (Therefore the question is round and pure [purely and simply], either to believe all whole and entire, or to believe nothing. The Holy Ghost cannot be rent or divided, so that he should teach or believe one part as true and the other as false.)

wine is represented the Holy Eucharist, the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, as Protestants call it, there can be no doubt in the mind of any one who at all admits of a mystical sense of Scripture. Even those who believe that the elements of the Eucharist are only symbols of the body and blood of Christ must consider them as sources of spiritual life, if they have any faith in the words of our Divine Lord. "Amen, amen, I say to you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life." * Catholics and Protestants, though at variance as to whether the consecrated wine be really the blood of Christ or only a symbol of it, at least agree on this point: that the wine which Jesus gave was to give everlasting life to the soul, dead by sin, and therefore is a true and proper remedy, applied by the good Samaritan to poor wounded man. You find the wine as such in Catholic and Protestant churches; but where is the *oil?* If the material wine is given as a remedy for sinful souls, it would not do to say that by the *oil* is understood the spiritual unction of prayer and preaching to the sinner. If the wine is understood to be material wine, the oil must be so likewise. Even when Christ sent forth His Apostles on their trial mission, without scrip, or bread, or money, the Scripture says: "And going forth they preached that men should do penance; and they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." †

In the Catholic Church, and in all sectarian churches not Protestant, even those which date

* St. John vi. 54, 55. † St. Mark vi. 12, 13.

back to the earliest days of Christianity, the holy oil is used not only for sacramental purposes, as in Baptism and Confirmation, but also in consecrating the altar-stones, churches, sacred vessels, and church-bells; even kings, bishops, and priests are anointed. Particular use is made of it in the holy sacrament of Extreme Unction where there is really question about the half-dead man, since it is given only to persons in danger of death by sickness; and all Christians from the time of the Apostles to the present (except Protestants) use holy oil especially consecrated for that purpose, to fulfil the ordinance of Christ, promulgated by St. James the Apostle: "Is any man sick among you, let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him."* If sins are forgiven thereby, then the grace of God, which is man's supernatural life, is given and imparted to the sick by the prayer of faith which the priest repeats *in anointing him with oil*, not after any method he might please to adopt, but in the name of the Lord—in the name of Him who causes the efficacy of Baptism and the Eucharist. Now, go through all the Protestant denominations; you will not find amongst them a single sect that makes use of holy oil in the name of the Lord, whether in sickness or in health; and yet the good Samaritan uses both *wine and oil* as a remedy for fallen man.† Who, then, is nearest to his example—

* St. James v. 14, 15.

† In his sermon on the New Testament (tom. i., Jen., fol. 335a) Luther admits Extreme Unction as a sacrament, like the Eucharist and Baptism:

the Catholic, who lets wounded intellect, memory, and will be bound up, and wine and oil poured into his wounded soul; or the Protestant, who refuses to hear anything about binding his intellect, and rejects the precious oil which the good Samaritan administers to poor wounded man for the health and salvation of his soul?

Then "setting him on his own beast, he brought him to an inn, and took care of him." As man is composed of a soul and body, and the body by nature belongs to the animal kingdom, I do not speak irreverently if I say that by *his own beast* the Son of God made man understood His own human nature. For in order to reunite fallen man with the Deity, from whom sin had separated him, He took upon Himself our human animal nature as well as our human soul; and He unites Himself, Humanity and Divinity, with our nature by means of the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, the sacrament of His real Body and Blood, united with His Soul and Divinity. "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me." * As I, the Son of God, live by the Father, being one substance and essence with Him, and existing by Him, *so he that eateth Me*, the Son of God made man, shall be made one with Me, and *shall live by Me.*

According to Protestant teaching, the human body

"Wir müssen die Messen lassen bleiben ein Sacrament und Testament, welche nicht sind, noch mögen Opfer sein; so wenig als die andere Sacrament, Tauff, Firmung, Buss, Oehlung, etc." (We must let the Masses remain a sacrament and testament, which are not nor may not be a sacrifice, but like the other sacraments, Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Unction, etc.)

* St. John vi. 58.

and blood of Jesus Christ had a comparatively short task to perform. They were assumed by the Son of God to suffer and die for us, and to pay the ransom of our redemption; after that they were taken up into heaven, and there all their action in the work of our sanctification ceases. If Christ continues to occupy Himself about us, it is only as God that He is represented to approach us. As God He forgives sins, as God He gives grace, as God only He metes out rewards or punishments; His real human Body and Blood themselves take no further part in the salvation of mankind.

The Catholic doctrine on this point is quite different; it teaches that the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, united, as it is, with His Soul and Divinity, still remain the chief fountain of *life* for the Christian soul during its earthly warfare. This real Body and Blood, under the forms of bread and wine, are given to us in the desert of this world, as the manna was formerly given to the chosen people of God in the desert of Arabia. As long as the Jews were on their journey to the promised land they were fed by God with this heavenly manna, which served as food and medicine. "There was not among their tribes one that was feeble."* Let us now hear the words of St. Paul on this subject: "The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of the Lord? and the bread which we break [according to the ordinance of Christ], is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" And again: "We being many are one bread, one body"†—all being incorporated, as it were, in this *living bread* and become one with it. St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alex-

* Ps. civ. 37. † 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

andria in the early part of the fifth century, writing against the heretics of his day, thus expresses himself in the fourth book of his commentaries on the Gospel of St. John: "Christ by His flesh hides in us life and a seed of immortality which destroys in us all corruption." In the tenth book on the same Gospel he explains in the clearest terms the wonderful manner of our union with Christ in this august sacrament—not by affection, but by an incorporation, a blending together; for "if any one pour a drop of melted wax into another, he mingles the one with the other throughout; so he also who receives the flesh and blood of the Lord becomes so united with Him that Christ is found in him and he in Christ" (chapter vii.) Christ, by His immortal and most holy flesh and blood, quickens, purifies, and heals the weakness and infirmity of our flesh, and causes us to live by *Him, as He lives by the Father.** For, although exalted in heaven at the right hand of the Father, He is still our "High-Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech" † (who offered bread and wine as a sacrifice); and "from the rising of the sun even to its going down He offers up one sacrifice for the remission of sin" ‡—that *clean oblation* which was to supersede all the ancient sacrifices, and is offered to the name of the Lord everywhere among the Gentiles (*i.e.*, nations that are not Jews).§ Thus it is that the sacred Humanity of

* St. John vi. 58. † Ps. cix. 5. ‡ Malachi i. 11.

§ Luther, in his commentary on the 109th Psalm, writes as follows (tom. i., Jena, fol. 95b): "Melchisedech war ein König und Priester, und opffert Wein und Brod auch für den heiligen Propheten Abraham, und für sein Gesind. In welcher Figur bedeutet wird, dass kein Heiliger so fromm ist, wan sich Christus nicht für ihn opffert, so würde er verdammt." (Melchisedech was a king and priest, and offered wine and bread also for the holy prophet Abraham and his servants. In which figure is signified that there is no

Jesus Christ continues the work of His incarnation and our redemption by offering for us a perpetual sacrifice. Thus He elevates our fallen human nature, through His human nature, to a union with His Divinity, verifying His own last wish: "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us: . . . that they may be one, as we also are one." * In this manner Jesus Christ prayed after the Last Supper, when His Apostles had received into their bodies the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, therefore His substance into their substance; for "He that eateth Me, the same shall live by Me." †

CHAPTER IV.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN CONVEYS THE TRAVELLER TO AN INN, WHICH IS A FIGURE OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

"HE brought him to an inn, and took care of him." An inn is a place of shelter for the accommodation of travellers. If hungry, thirsty, or weary, they are refreshed there; if sick, they are taken care of until able to continue their journey.

saint so pious that if Christ did not sacrifice Himself for him he would be condemned.) In the same work (fol. 96a) we read the following: "Nu was ist aber das Brod und Wein für Abraham geopffert? Das deutet auff das Priesterthum Christi in dieser Zeit biss an den jüngsten Tag, da er das verborgne Sacrament des Altars seines heiligen Leichnambs und theuren Bluts opffert in der Christenheit." (But what was this bread and wine offered in sacrifice for Abraham? It referred to the priesthood of Christ in our time, who offers, and will offer throughout Christendom, till the day of the last judgment, the sacrifice of His sacred Body and precious Blood in the hidden Sacrament of the altar.)

* St. John xvii. 21, 22. † Ibid. vi. 58.

Now, we are all travellers in this vale of tears ; there is no lasting city for us here; we are journeying to our home beyond the grave, where two eternal homes await us ; one or the other will, and must, be ours—there is no alternative. One is an abode of perfect happiness, unchanging and everlasting as God Himself; the other an abyss of eternal torments whence all hope is excluded. No man in his senses would expose himself to misery or torment which he foresaw, and could easily avoid if he wished, even though this torment was only temporal, such as the evils of this transitory life. But since there is question of eternity, therefore it is the most important and essential duty of every man, travelling to a home that will endure for ever, to seek out the narrow, strait way that leads to happiness, and, having found it, to persevere, in spite of all the obstacles which may impede his way or the fatigues he may have to bear. "For the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." *

From these words of our Saviour it is evident that this road and this conquest are difficult for fallen man. But Jesus Christ, the good Samaritan, being moved with compassion for his misery, has provided the inn not merely for his shelter and refreshment, but also to direct the traveller in the safe and certain path that leads to *life everlasting.* This *inn* is His holy Church which He has established in this land of our pilgrimage ; here He leads fallen man whom He wishes to save, to be guided, as well as healed and nourished, by the *host* whom He has appointed to govern it. Fear not, then, you who seek the truth with sincerity, though wounded in every faculty and

* St. Matt. xi. 12.

stripped of every supernatural gift; still if you hunger and thirst after justice, this good God who wills the salvation of all men will certainly lead you to this unfailing asylum, which the storms of time can never shatter, because He Himself has erected it, not upon the quicksands of human opinion about the truth, producing nothing but discord and division, and causing at length the total ruin of the building, but upon a solid rock, chosen and consolidated by Himself for that purpose, so that even "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." *

As long as Jesus Christ Himself remained in this mortal life He took care of fallen, wounded man, and brought him to His inn (*i.e.*, He joined him to His Church), attended to his wounds, and relieved all his wants. But He was on His journey, and therefore could not always remain visible on this earth; hence we read in the parable: "The next day he took out two pence and gave them to the host."

The time of our Lord's mortal life being the day in which He sought, found, and cared for poor wounded man, and this day ending with His death on the cross, the next commenced with His glorious Resurrection from the dead. What did He do on this first day of His immortal life? He could not always stay with the wounded man in the inn. He was going to the Father. "Yet a little while I am with you: and then I go to Him that sent me." † But before going to Him that sent Him He provided for the poor wounded man whom He had brought to the inn. The next day "He took out two pence and gave them to the host." We have but to open the Gospels in order to see what He gave on that day of triumph,

* St. Matt. xvi. 18. † St. John vii. 33.

the beginning of the never-ending day of his glorious immortality. There we shall see what are the *two pence*, and who is the *host* and what commission He received. When Jesus appeared to His assembled disciples after His Resurrection, the doors being shut, He stood in the midst and said to them, "Peace be to you. And when He had said this He showed them His hands and His side," to prove that it was He Himself who stood before them in the flesh. "He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you." * Who will say that this wish, "Peace be to you," was only an idle wish that had no consequences, just as that of a rich man who would wish a good-morning to a poor beggar, and let him go without giving him a penny to buy his breakfast? The wish of Jesus Christ, "Peace be to you," was by no means an idle wish. He granted what He wished them, or at least gave the means to obtain it. Long before the prophets announced Him as the "Prince of peace." † At His birth the heavenly host of angels sang: "Peace on earth to men of good will." ‡ He came on earth to establish peace between God and man, to reconcile the rebellious creature with his outraged Creator; and no sooner has He paid the bloody ransom and appeased the offended justice of God than He hastens to His disciples and announces peace to them and the terms of peace. He comes as an envoy of the Father: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" §—for the same end, with the same powers, to continue the work which I began.

"When He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and

* St. John xx. 19–21. † Is. ix. 6. ‡ St. Luke ii. 14. § St. John xx. 21.

whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." * Behold here the *two pence* which Jesus Christ, the good Samaritan, takes out of the treasury of His mercies. It is the power of forgiving sins or retaining them, so appropriate and necessary for the cure and restoration of the half-dead man who had fallen among robbers, and who was stripped and wounded by sin. "He breathed on them" to signify what He was about to confer on them; for as the breath proceeding from the mouth of Christ mingled with the air which the disciples inhaled, so also the *Holy Ghost,* who is God, and by whose power sins are forgiven, proceeded from Him and was communicated to them. But for what purpose? Jesus Christ Himself explains it: "Whose sins" (now, when you have received the Holy Ghost from My lips with the breath of My mouth) "you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain" (or not forgive), "they are retained." Hence these *two pence* are the power of binding and loosing which Jesus Christ gave to St. Peter to be communicated by him to the other Apostles: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." Now, if the good Samaritan bound up the wounds of fallen man, it is no wonder that He gives this power of binding and loosing to the host of the house; for this power is necessary for *the host* of the inn, if he is to continue the good work commenced by the good Samaritan.†

* St. John 22, 23.

† Here I may properly quote what Luther wrote concerning the keys of St. Peter and the power he received from Christ. It is taken from his comments on the Gospel of St. John (tom. v., Jen., fol. 232b and 233a): "Christus spricht doch ja hier klärlich, er wolle die Schlüssel Petro geben. Sagt

"The host" of the inn is a distinct person from the good Samaritan · he has charge of the whole es-

nicht, dass er zweierlei Schlüssel habe ; sondern dieselbigen Schlüssel, die er selbst hat, und keine andere hat, die gibt er Petro. Als solt er sagen : was gaffest du genen Himmel nach meinen Schlüsseln ? hörest du nicht, dass ich sie Petro gegeben habe ? es seynd wohl Himmels-Schlüssel, das ist wahr, aber sie seynd nicht im Himmel ; ich hab' sie hierunten auf der Erden gelassen, du solst sie nicht in dem Himmel oder irgend anderswo suchen, sondern in Peters Mund finden, da hab ich sie hingelegt. Peters Mund ist mein Mund, seine Zung ist meine Schlüssel Beutel, sein Ambt ist mein Ambt, sein Binden ist mein Binden, sein Lösen ist mein Lösen, seine Schlüssel seynd meine Schlüssel. Ich habe kein andere: was die binden, das ist gebunden, was die lösen, das ist loss. Da haben wir nu was Schlüssel sind, nemblich ein Ambt, Macht, oder Befehl von Gott der Christenheit gegeben, durch Christum dem Menschen die Sünden zu behalten, und zu vergeben. Den also spricht Christus, Matt. ix. : Auff dass ihr wisset, dass des Menschen Sohn Macht habe, Auff Erden die Sünde zu vergeben, sprach er zu den Gichtbrüchtigen : Stehe auff, &c.; und bald darnach : das Volk preisete Gott der solche Macht dem Menschem gegeben hat. Lass dich hie nicht irren das Pharisäisch Geschwätz, damit sich etliche selbst narren, wie ein Mensch möge Sünden vergeben, so doch die Gnad nicht geben kan, noch den heiligen Geist ? bleib du bey den Worten Christi, und seye du gewiss, dass Gott keine andere Weiss hat die Sünde zu vergeben, den durch das mündliche Wort, so er uns Menschen befohlen hat. Wo du nit die Vergebung im Wort suchest, wirst du umsonst genen den Himmel gaffen nach der Gnad oder, wie sie sagen, nach der innerlichen Vergebung." (Here Christ says clearly He would give the keys to Peter. Say not that He has two sorts of keys ; the self-same keys which He Himself has He gives to Peter, and He has no others. As if He said : Why do you gape at heaven after My keys ? Hear you not that I have given them to Peter ? They are indeed the keys of heaven, it is true, but they are not in heaven. I have left them on earth ; therefore you should not seek them in heaven, nor anywhere else, but find them in Peter's mouth ; there I have deposited them. Peter's mouth is My mouth, his tongue the bag for My keys, his office is My office, his binding My binding, his loosing My loosing, his keys are My keys. I have no others ; what they bind is bound, what they loose is loosed. Here, now, we have what the keys are—namely, an office, power, or command given to the Apostles and their successors to retain the sins of men and to forgive them. For thus says Christ in the ninth chapter of St. Matthew : "That you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, He said to the man sick of the palsy: Arise, etc." And soon after the people praised God, who hath given such power to men. Be not misled by pharisaical prating, whereby some make fools of themselves, how a man may forgive sins, since he cannot give the grace nor the Holy Ghost. Abide by the word of Christ, and be sure that God has no other mode of forgiving sins than by the word of mouth, by which He gave command to us men. If you do not seek forgiveness in the word you will gape at heaven in vain after grace, or, as they say, inward forgiveness.)

tablishment, with everything in it; he has to take care of and supply the wants of fallen human nature. As the inn is a figure of the true Church of Jesus Christ, so the host of the inn represents the supreme visible head of the Church—namely, St. Peter and his lawful successors, the popes. When our Lord called St. Peter to the apostleship He changed his name, which was Simon, into that of Peter, which means *a rock;* and throughout the Old and New Testament, wherever God gave a name to an individual, that name signified what that person was or was to be. When the Almighty called the first man *Adam—i.e.*, of dust—it signified that he would not be steady; but when Jesus Christ chose Simon, whom He called *Peter*—a rock—He thereby signified the unflinching stability of faith wherewith He endowed Peter and his successors in the Apostolic See.

When St. Peter, enlightened from above, was the first to acknowledge the true character of Jesus Christ in those sublime words, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," our Divine Lord calls him blessed for it, and, in return, reveals to him his own true character: "And I say to thee: Thou art [no more *Simon* but] Peter [a *rock*], and upon this rock I will build my Church."* He promises to *give* him *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, the supreme power in His Church. The one to whom the keys of the house are entrusted governs the house. He gives him the power of binding and loosing; men are *bound* by obligations, and also *loosed* from obligations. On a previous occasion our Lord asked St. Peter: "Who

* St. Matt. xvi. 18.

thinkest thou is that faithful and wise steward whom the lord hath set over his family to give them their measure of wheat in due season?" * The one whom our blessed Saviour calls here the *faithful and wise* steward He calls in our parable the host of the inn, who presides over the whole establishment; for even when the disciples contended among themselves as to "which of them should be the greater," † our Lord does not say, No one among you is or will be greater than another, you are all alike, but He gives a lesson of humility to him who would be *the greater.* Finally, on the day following His glorious resurrection He ratifies anew the promises made to Peter, charging him with the care of His whole flock: "Feed My lambs"; and again, "Feed My sheep." ‡ Here He entrusts to him not only the *lambs,* but even the *sheep*—consequently, the whole Church—not only to feed, but (according to the Greek text) *to be the shepherd* of His flock. Behold now him who in our parable is the *host* of the inn!

What did the good Samaritan give the host? "He took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him: and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee." He gave him all that He had. "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth" for the salvation of mankind; and "as the Father hath sent Me, I also send you," with the same power, for the same end—to cure the fallen, wounded *man.* Do as I did whilst I was with

* St. Luke xii. 42. † St. Luke ix. 46 and St. Matt. xx. 26.
‡ St. John xxi. 15, 17.

you; and if that which I gave you is not sufficient, go on, spare no expense, no trouble; I *on my return*—when I come to judge the living and the dead, and to reward every one according to his works—*I will repay thee.* We see here plainly that the power given is unlimited; it extends as far as good and truth extend. He has all power to do good and to propagate the truth; but no power is given him to do wrong, or propagate falsehood. Power is given for the edification and sanctification of the Church, not for its destruction, which would certainly take place were vice and error permitted. All that is granted to the host is without limits: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind, whatsoever thou shalt loose; whose sins"—no matter what sins, no matter how many—"you shall forgive" or "you shall retain." There is in My treasury abundant grace and salvation for all the family of God; but to assign the proper "*measure*" and to determine the "*due season*" are left to the discretion of the faithful and wise steward —"the host of the inn."

This truth puts an end to the murmurs of those who complain of so great an assumption of power by the popes. If our Lord Jesus Christ, the good Samaritan, laid no restrictions on the host, and even promised to repay whatsoever he should spend "over and above," it is certainly not allowed to any mortal creature to limit this "whatsoever" according to the narrow views of private opinion.

From all this it is clear and evident that our Divine Redeemer, the good Samaritan, after His resurrection, entrusted the care and restoration of fallen

man to His holy Church on earth, which is in charge of the host of the house, the supreme pastor of the flock, St. Peter and his successors, the popes; and that only in the true Church of Christ, the *inn* of the good Samaritan, can be found the proper refreshment and remedies for the evils which sin has brought on the human race. Hence all those who have sinned in Adam, those poor travellers who fell among robbers and were stripped of all supernatural gifts, wounded and left half dead, must not only come into the inn if they wish to save their souls, but must also submit to the treatment and direction which they receive there from the host and his subaltern officers. The power of the *two pence*—of binding and loosing, of forgiving or retaining sins, as exercised in the practice of confession—must be resorted to until a cure is effected and the patient is able to go to his heavenly home spiritually sound and healthy; for "nothing defiled can enter"* into the kingdom of heaven.

Suppose, now, that one of the patients whom the good Samaritan brought to the inn became dissatisfied, and, gathering together the little strength he had, crawled away from the inn, and, with a medical book under his arm, said to himself: "I do not want to stay any longer in that place, nor will I be any longer under the care and treatment of that host and his inferior officers. No one shall inspect my wounds or prescribe remedies for me; I care not for their *wine* and *oil*, or anything else they have to cure me. I have my book, which contains prescriptions for all my evils. If I read it every day, and trust in

* Apoc. xxi. 27.

the goodness and mercy of the good Samaritan, I shall be cured." What, dear reader, would you say or think of such a patient? Well, the very same thing can be said of all those who left the true and living Church of Jesus Christ, rejected her sacraments and the authority of her visible head, protested against her teaching and laws as being strict and binding on the conscience, believing themselves safe and their salvation secure if they but read the Bible and trusted the Saviour. Oh! how different would our parable sound were it to represent sectarian teaching. The man who fell among robbers would not only be stripped and wounded and left half dead, but rotten to the very core, since they believe that sin introduced total depravity. The good Samaritan, going up to him, would have poured wine into his wounds, but no oil, as oil is never used by the sects as a remedy against sin. He would not have bound up the wounds of his intellect, no matter how much He might bind the other wounds. He would have established as many inns as there are Christian sects in the world, with no host to preside, and no *two pence*, or anything to spend over and above. For, say they, all that is an assumption of power, an usurpation, a blasphemy, etc.

Consider, on the other hand, how beautifully and appropriately every detail of this parable is explained, and suited to the teachings of the holy Catholic Church established by the good Samaritan, not for English-speaking, or German-speaking, or Russian-speaking nations, but for all nations of the earth, without distinction of country or language. For as all have sinned in Adam, so all must enter the inn, and be cared for and directed by the host of the

house until that final day when the archangel's trumpet shall call us to meet Jesus Christ, the good Samaritan, when He shall return in great power and majesty to judge the living and the dead.

CHAPTER V.

IMPORTANT REMARKS ON THE NATURE OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

HAVING considered in the parable of the good Samaritan the fall of man and his restoration through Jesus Christ by means of His holy Church, we will now proceed to examine carefully that series of parables in which our Divine Lord and Master depicts His own true Church, His kingdom on earth, so that every one who is not as blind and hard-hearted as the Scribes and Pharisees of old (*who saw, and saw not, heard and did not understand*) can see which is that Church wherein the good Samaritan takes care of fallen man, through the ministry of the host, until His return at the end of the world.

In the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew there are several parables recorded, commencing with the words, "The kingdom of heaven is likened," etc. Now, this cannot be the kingdom of God's glory, for there are no tares or bad fishes to cast out in that kingdom. It must of necessity be the Church of Jesus Christ on earth, the new-chosen children of God, who have superseded the people of the ancient law.

It is called "the kingdom," in the singular number, not in the plural number, *kingdoms*, for Jesus

Christ founded but one Church, which is His kingdom; "and of His kingdom there shall be no end." * He does not call it a *republic,* but a kingdom, thus describing the monarchical form of government which He gave to His Church. A kingdom is a country governed by a king; and if the king does not preside over it in person, he governs it by means of a viceroy, who in everything represents the king, and governs the country according to the powers and laws received from the king. If nowadays we have so many Christian sects, each one calling itself the true Church of Christ, it is not because He founded them, but because "*many revolted* and did not remain in the doctrine of Christ." †

To say that all churches are good and pleasing in the sight of God, since they all believe in the same God and in His Son, Jesus Christ, whom He has sent, is the same as to say that provinces and individuals originally of the same kingdom, but revolting against their lawfully-constituted authorities and forming laws for themselves not sanctioned by the king, are just as agreeable to the king as those who were always faithful and submissive to him and to his ministers, and that it is enough to say to Jesus Christ, "Lord, Lord!" in order to be saved, no matter how many of His doctrines one rejects, nor how many of His laws and ordinances are despised. He Himself answers: "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of My Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Many will say to Me in that day: Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name?" (and to prophesy does not only

* St. Luke i. 33. † 2 Ep. of St. John 9.

mean to foretell future things, but also to explain and discourse on religious matters), "and cast out devils in Thy name, and done many miracles in Thy name? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity."* If the Apostle St. Paul says, "There must be also heresies," it is not because Jesus Christ approves of them, but He permits them only "that they also who are approved may be made manifest."† They are, as it were, the shades which serve to make what is light still clearer and more visible to the world. But shade is darkness, and nothing dark or defiled will ever be admitted into the kingdom of glory. "Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in you be not darkness."‡

If, then, Christ has established but one Church, which is His kingdom—"the kingdom of heaven"—and this Church has a *monarchical form of government*, behold here already a main feature of the holy Catholic Church.

* St. Matt. vii. 21. † 1 Cor. xi. 19. ‡ St. Luke xi. 35.

SECTION II.

THE GOOD SEED AND THE COCKLE.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. And the servants of the goodman of the house coming said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it cockle? And he said to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: No, lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn."—St. Matt. xiii. 24, etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE GOOD SEED REPRESENTS THE TRUE CHURCH, THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST ON EARTH; THE COCKLE IS A FIGURE OF THE NUMEROUS HERESIES WHICH HAVE SPRUNG UP SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT.

THE above parable is explained by our Divine Saviour Himself in the same chapter of the Gospel; but as this explanation is very brief and given in a general way, the parable may be applied still

more aptly to the subject it was intended to represent, as there are several particulars which our Lord left unexplained, and whose special meaning applies to the Church. In this parable our blessed Saviour gives us in advance outlines of the history of His Church, and her position and relation not only with regard to all iniquity in general, but to heresies and false doctrines with which the spirit of evil would endeavor to supplant, and even destroy, her if possible.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field." It is not necessary for me to mention that this man, who is called "the goodman of the house" (v. 27), is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The good seed is His doctrine; and if He Himself says that "the good seed are the children of the kingdom" (v. 38), they are the fruit which the good seed has already produced. For what made them children of the kingdom? It was the word of God, the true doctrine of Christ, which they believed and obeyed. The good seed being "*wheat*," the grains were all alike; so also is the belief of every member of this kingdom, the true Church—all must be alike, otherwise they are excluded from the kingdom; for there is not question of human opinion, earthly seed, but of divine faith, heavenly seed.

This good seed is sowed in "the field," which, as our Saviour says, is the world; for this whole world was given to Jesus Christ, that He might form to Himself "a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works";* a people that would think what He thought and will what He commanded; and this people is chosen and picked out, as it were, from all nations of the earth, to constitute that glorious

* Tit. ii. 14.

Church which shall reign with Him in heaven for all eternity.

From the very beginning, then, one and the same good seed—wheat—was sown all over the world; that is, there was preached but one faith and one religion. Twenty-four years had not yet elapsed from the ascension of our Lord into heaven when St. Paul could write to the Romans: "Your faith is spoken of in the whole world." * This is a fact that should be well remembered, for it proves that the religion of Christ was preached in the whole world, even before all the books of the New Testament were written, and that it was the *Roman* faith; for if it were not known by all the *people* of the world, then it would not have been spoken of by them.

"But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat." Now, if the wheat represents the word of God, the true and genuine doctrine of Christ, the cockle certainly signifies the errors wherewith the spirit of darkness, who is "the father of lies," endeavored, in the course of time, to supplant the Church of Christ. And this happened "while men were asleep." For our Saviour foresaw that, when His Church was once safely planted all over the world, men would give themselves up to a false security; and even the "servants of the goodman of the house," instead of being watchful, would fall asleep, and that the wicked spirit would avail himself of this as the fairest opportunity to sow cockle among the wheat. Alexander Campbell, founder of the Campbellite Baptists in America, and some other commentators, explain the Greek word signifying *cockle* as meaning a certain

* Rom. i. 8.

weed having the appearance of wheat. Now, admitting this interpretation to be correct, it serves to prove more clearly that error, in order to make itself acceptable to men, always endeavors to take the appearance of truth, and very often it requires a sharp and keen eye to detect its true nature.

Since this is the case, how are we to secure ourselves against imposition in such an all-important matter as that of knowing the true religion of Christ, by which alone we can be saved? How shall we distinguish the cockle from the wheat when they are so much alike? The answer is not difficult. You have only to believe in the words of your Divine Master, who is Sovereign Truth, and use your own natural common sense, and you cannot be led astray. You see in the parable that the wheat was sown first, and afterwards the cockle. So also any religion or church that does not date its origin from the time of Christ and His Apostles is not, and cannot claim to be, the true religion or Church of Jesus Christ, no matter how truthful it may appear, for the simple reason that it came too late. The apostolicity is wanting.

It avails nothing to say that the true religion flourished for a few centuries without error or corruption, and afterwards fell into error and became corrupt; * for we read: "When the blade sprang

* In the year 1541, just five years before his death, Luther, writing on the infallibility of the Church, speaks as follows (tom. vii., Jen., fol. 416b): "Darum kann und mag die heilige Kirche keine Lügen, noch falsche Lehr leiden, sondern muss eitel heilig, wahrhafftig, das ist, allein Gottes Wort lehren." "Eitel Gottes Wort, oder Warheit, muss die Kirche lehren, und wie könnte es auch anderst seyn, weil Gottes Mund der Kirchen Mund ist. Und wiederumb: Gott kann ja nicht lügen auch die Kirche nicht." (Therefore the holy Church cannot and may not bear lies nor false doctrines, but must teach only what is holy and truthful—that is, God's word alone. The Church must teach only God's word. or the truth. And how could it be otherwise? Because the mouth of God is the mouth of the Church; and,

up and brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle." The good seed, and the blade springing up from it, were not choked or destroyed by the cockle, neither were they changed into cockle, but continued to thrive and bring forth fruit—the fruit of everlasting life—when the cockle made its appearance. In other words, the true Church of Jesus Christ continued to prosper and save the souls of men, even when false religions and erroneous churches sprang up around her, each pretending to be the true Church of Christ. And here observe that the Roman Catholic Church was the first Church, and the only one, established by Jesus Christ; consequently her religion was and is no other than the one she received from Him, and which gave her existence. She had already formed and sent to heaven millions of saints and martyrs before any one of the hundreds of sects which now pretend to be the true Church of Christ (in this or any other country) was even dreamt of. She formed and peopled heaven with real saints when these sects were working against her with all the power that the malice of demons could suggest or the power of man exercise; and she is doing so still, even after hundreds of sects which have arisen under similar pleas and pretexts have vanished for ever, not only from existence, but even from the memory of man.

again, God cannot lie, so neither can the Church.) On the following page he says farther: "Das ist nu alles dahin geredet, dass die Kirche muss allein Gottes Wort lehren, und das gewiss seyn, dardurch sie der Grund, und Pfeyler der Wahrheit, und auff den Felsen gebauet, heilig und unsträfflich heisst; das ist wie man recht und wohl sagt, die Kirche kann nicht irren, dan Gottes Wort, welches sie lehret, kann nicht irren." (All this is said for this end, viz., that the Church must teach the word of God alone; and this must be sure, because she is the pillar and the ground of truth, and built upon a rock; is called holy and without blemish—that is, as it is well and appropriately said, the Church cannot err, for the word of God which she teaches cannot err.)

Nor will it do to say (and this is the main excuse by which the sects endeavor to justify their separation from the Catholic Mother Church), that it was the pope and the Catholic priesthood who, in the so-called dark ages, corrupted the Church and falsified her teachings. If that were so, how could the servants of the "goodman of the house" (and by these, evidently, are understood the pastors of the Church, who helped to plant the good seed) come to their Lord and Master, and say, "Sir, didst Thou not sow good seed in Thy field? Whence, then, hath it cockle?" Would it not be the highest insolence, and would not such a question bring forth from the lips of their omniscient Lord an answer like this: "It is your own work; you yourselves, wicked and unfaithful servants, have done this evil; instead of sowing wheat, you have sown cockle, and all the harm that is done to My field is done by you"? But no! "He said, An enemy hath done this." The Divine Lord of the field knew very well who was the author of such a misfortune. And truly this diversity of creeds is a real, a fatal misfortune for numerous immortal souls. Although designing persons wish to pass it off as a sign of American progress, it is not a friendly tongue, devoted to the cause of God and the salvation of mankind, that speaks in such a manner, but an *enemy* to both; or, as the Latin text has it, "A man that is an enemy hath done this." For what the spirit of wickedness is not able to accomplish himself he will do by means of proud and self-conceited men, whose passions he excites to stand up even "against the Lord and His anointed."* It is a remarkable fact that almost all founders of new sects were more or

* Ps. ii. 2.

less connected with the office of teachers, professors of universities, schools, etc. Nor is it a thing to be wondered at that this class of persons, unless well founded in humility, are particularly inclined to fall into error. From the constant habit of dictating their views to their pupils, and receiving the incense of their homage as oracles of learning and wisdom, they become more and more unwilling to be contradicted in any point they choose to advance, or to submit their opinion to any other judgment than their own, until at length they believe themselves infallible, and, like Lucifer, set themselves against Almighty God and His Holy Spirit, who teaches and guides the Church of Jesus Christ.* And thus,

* In the year 1519 Luther wrote in his instructions concerning some articles which were imputed to him by his adversaries (tom., Jen., fol. 166b): "Dass die Römische Kirche für allen andern geehret seye, ist kein Zweiffel, dan selbst St. Peter und Paul, 46 Päpst, und viel hundert tausend Martyrer, ihr Blut vergossen, die Höll, und Welt überwunden, dass man wohl greiffen mag, wie gar einen besondern Augenblick Gott auff diese Kirche habe." (That the Roman Church is honored before all others there can be no doubt, for even Sts. Peter and Paul, forty-six popes, and many hundred thousands of martyrs have shed their blood for it and conquered hell and the world, so that men might well understand what a particular regard God has for this Church.)

Again, in the year 1528—that is, eleven years after the commencement of his Reformation—he wrote the following to two parsons (tom. iv., Jen., fol. 320a): "Wir bekennen, dass unter dem Pabstumb viel Christlichen Gutes ja alles christliche Gut seye, und auch daselbst herkommen seye an uns; nehmlich wir bekennen, dass im Pabstumb die rechte heilige Schrift seye, rechter Tauff, rechtes Sacrament des Altars, rechte Schlüssel zur Vergebung der Sünden, recht Predigt-Ambt, rechter Catechismus, als; zehn gebott (die Artickel des Glaubens, das Vater unser . . .). Ich sage, dass unter dem Pabst die rechte Christenheit ist, ja der rechte Ausbund der Christenheit, und viel frommer grosser Heiligen. . . . Ist dann nu unter dem Pabst die Christenheit, so muss sie wahrlich Christus Leib und Glied seyn; ist sie sein Leib, so hat sie rechten Geist, Evangelium, Glauben, Tauff, Sacrament, Schlüssel, Predigt-Ambt, Gebett, heilige Schrifft und alles, was die Christenheit haben soll." ("We confess that under the Papacy there is much of the Christian good—yes, all Christian good—which has also come to us from it: namely, we confess that in the Papacy is the genuine holy Scripture, genuine Baptism, genuine Sacrament of the altar, genuine keys for forgiveness of sins, the

"professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." *

CHAPTER II.

THE GOOD SEED AND THE COCKLE—CONTINUED.

"AND the servants said to Him: Wilt Thou that we go and gather it up?" The spirit of the present age (which, after all, we are not bound to believe to be exactly the best, as far as the interests of our immortal souls are concerned, for our Saviour calls the wicked spirit "the prince of this world") believes religious error (*the cockle*) to be as much entitled to a right of existence as truth (*the good seed*), and is even inclined, in many instances, to favor the former rather than the latter; but the servants of the "goodman of the house" of olden times thought differently. They firmly believed that the cockle had no right to exist; they even wished to root it up entirely, but the Master of the field did not approve of their doing so. Why? It is not, surely,

genuine office of preaching, the genuine Catechisms, the Ten Commandments, the articles of faith, the Our Father. . . . I say that under the Pope is the genuine Christianity, yes, the true ocean of Christianity and many pious great saints.") When, in the year 1538—*i.e.*, twenty-one years after his Reformation—Luther preached on the sixteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, he acknowledged again: "Wahr ist: im Pabstumb ist Gottes Wort, Apostel-Ambt, und wir die heilige Schrift, Tauff, Sacramenten und Predigt-Stuhl von ihnen genommen haben, was wüsten wir sonst davon? darum muss auch der Glaub, Christliche Kirchen und der heilige Geist bey ihnen seyn." ("True it is that in the Papacy is the word of God, apostolic office, and that we have taken from them the holy Scriptures, Baptism, Sacraments, and pulpit; otherwise, what would we know about them? Therefore, also, must faith, Christian Church, and the Holy Spirit be with them.")

* Rom. i. 22.

that He grants the same right to the cockle as to the wheat, or desires that His workmen should show themselves indifferent with regard to both. The ministers of the Church are bound to exert their utmost vigilance to prevent the spreading of the cockle—that is, of pernicious doctrines. Still, Christ permits that there should be heresies, because these, in spite of themselves, contribute to the greater glory of His Church, and because the immediate destruction of those who profess heresy would entail the loss of many souls, since many who at present are cockle will afterwards, by His mercy, be converted into wheat. Hence the owner of the field says: "No, lest perhaps gathering up the cockle you root up the wheat also together with it."

"Suffer both to grow until the harvest." This is not the time to separate them, but the time will come at the end of the world. In the meantime *suffer both to grow until the harvest*—that is, the great day of General Judgment; then that final and most awful separation shall be made.*

* Remark here that the *wheat* is to grow from the time it was planted until the end of the world, always visible, thriving, and bringing forth fruit—a true figure of the perpetuity of the Catholic Church. How fully Luther was convinced of this perpetuity and authority of the Roman Church up to the year 1532 is manifest from a letter written by him to some unruly spirits (Rotten-Geister) who had denied the real presence of Jesus Christ in the blessed Eucharist (tom. v., Jen., fol. 490a): "Zudem so ist dieser Artikel nicht ein Lehr, oder ausser der Schrift von Menschen erdichtet, sondern klärlich im Evangelio durch helle und ungezweifelte Wort Christi gestiftet, und gegründet, und von Anfang der Christlichen Kirchen, bis auff diese Stund einträchtiglich geglaubt, und gehalten, wie das aus weisen der lieben Vätter Bücher, und Schriften, beider Griechischer und Lateinischer Sprach; dazu der täglich Brauch, und das Werk mit der Erfahrung bis auff diese Stund. Welches Zeugnisz der gantzen heiligen Christlichen Kirchen, wan wir schon nichts mehr hätten, soll uns allein genugsam seyn bei diesem Artikel zu bleiben, und darüber keinen Rotten-Geist zu hören, noch zu leyden. Dan es fehrlich ist, etwas zu hören, oder zu glauben, wider das eintrechtig Zeugnisz, Glauben und Lehr der gantzen heiligen Christlichen

"And in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn; but the wheat gather ye into My barn." Our Saviour says: "The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels." They are first to gather up the cockle and bind it into

Kirchen, so von Anfang her nu über fünffzehn hundert Yahr in aller Welt eintrechtiglich gehalten hat. Wans ein neuer Artikel wäre, und nicht von Anfang der heiligen Christlichen Kirchen; oder wäre nicht bey allen Kirchen, noch bei der gantzen Christenheit in aller Welt so einträchtiglich gehalten, wäre es nicht so fehrlich, noch schrecklich daran zu zweifflen, oder disputiren, ob es recht seye. Nu es aber von Anfang her, und so weit die gantze Christenheit ist, einträchtiglich gehalten ist; wer nu daran zweiffelt, der thut eben so viel, als glaubt er keine Christliche Kirche, und verdammt damit nicht allein die gantze heilige Christliche Kirche als eine verdammte Ketzerin, sondern auch Christum selbst mit allen Aposteln, und Propheten, die diesen Artikel, da wir sprechen: 'Ich glaube eine heilige Christliche Kirche,' gegründet haben und gewaltig bezeugt. Nehmlich, Christus Matth. xxviii., siehe ich bin bey euch bis an der Welt Ende. Und St. Paulus, 2 Tim. iii., die Kirche Gottes ist ein Säul und Grundveste der Wahrheit." (Besides, this article is not a mere teaching invented by men or without Scripture, but clearly founded and established in the Gospel by the plain and undoubted words of Christ, and from the beginning of the Christian Church unanimously believed and held, as is demonstrated by the dear Fathers' books and writings of both the Greek and Latin tongues, to which is added the daily usage and practice, with the experience, up to the present hour; which testimony of the whole Christian Church, even if we had nothing more, should alone be sufficient to induce us to abide by this article, and to hear no complotting spirit on this subject, nor tolerate any. For it is a dangerous thing to hear or believe anything which is against the uniform testimony, faith, and teaching of the whole Christian Church, which has unanimously held it all over the world, from the very beginning, now over fifteen hundred years. If it were a new article, and not from the beginning of the holy Christian Church, or if it was not so uniformly held by all churches nor by all Christians throughout the world, it would not be so dangerous nor terrible to doubt about it, or to dispute whether it was true. But now as it has been unanimously held from the beginning and as far as Christendom extends, whosoever doubts about it now does as much as if he believed in no holy Christian Church, and condemns not only the whole Christian Church as a damned heretic, but Christ Himself with all His Apostles and prophets, who have founded the article in which we say, I believe in a holy Christian Church; which is mightily testified by Christ Himself [St. Matt. xxviii.]: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the end of the world"; and again [St. Paul, 2 Tim. iii.]: "The Church of God is the pillar and the ground of truth.")

bundles; for as all those out of the Church, though divided into many sects, still unite and are linked together in opposing and making war against the kingdom of Christ and His Vicar on earth, so shall these heresiarchs, with those of their followers who blindly adhered to their error, in spite of the doubts and reproaches of conscience which the grace of God had at times awakened within them, be tied together by the same ties, and form an extra bundle of cockle *to burn*. For these men—setting up altar against altar, laws against laws, aiding and encouraging those unfortunate souls who, blinded by unlawful passions, have forsaken the path of truth which leads to life, and revolted against those whose duty it was to govern and direct them under God, and, when necessary, to admonish them of what was blameworthy in their conduct and likely to prove dangerous to themselves and others—notwithstanding the charity exercised towards them, have fallen away and led others in their path, to the eternal loss of millions of precious souls. Bad Catholics also who, though professing the true faith, have neglected to comply with its obligations and abused its sacraments, the Scripture designates as *chaff*, which is in like manner to *burn* in *unquenchable fire;** and as chaff is a more combustible material than cockle, so we may infer what grievous punishments await all such persons if they are not truly penitent before death cuts them off.

I know that those out of the Church are apt to condemn her, and consider her severe and uncharitable, because she maintains that out of her pale there is no salvation. But let these good people re-

* St. Matt. iii. 12.

flect awhile, and they will see plainly that it, as well as the rest of her dogmas, is the teaching of Christ and His Apostles. She cannot change the divine words of Him who is Truth itself. "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." * Now, what use would it be to preach the Gospel to every creature, if every creature was not bound to believe it; and if he that believeth not, and is not baptized, shall be saved just as well as he who believes and is baptized in the true Church of Jesus Christ? It is true, there are different degrees of punishment in the next life, according to the different degrees of guilt, for such as die out of the Church.

Now, to say that criminal—that is, wilful—unbelief and misbelief shall have the same reward as true belief, and suffer no punishment whatever, is in direct opposition to common sense as well as to the words of Christ: "He that believeth not shall be condemned." To refuse Jesus Christ the obedience of our understanding is as great a sin as to refuse Him the obedience of our will; for he that will not believe what Jesus Christ teaches places his own will and judgment above that of Christ and gives Him the lie, in the same manner as he who breaks the commandments prefers his own will to the will of God, which latter he despises and treads under foot.

Hence let every man who values his own future and eternal happiness examine carefully whether he be the good grain, the chaff, or the cockle; bearing in mind at the same time what the Sovereign Judge and Master of the field shall say to His reapers on

* St. Mark xvi. 15, 16.

the day of the great harvest: "Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn; but the wheat gather ye into My barns."

Remember that neither cockle—no matter how much it may resemble the wheat—nor chaff, which is a part of the good seed, shall be gathered into the barn of the Lord, but the pure wheat alone—that is, the faithful members of the true Church of Christ on earth, who have arrived at the goal either by the way of holy baptismal innocence, or, "having washed their garments in the blood of the Lamb," by the way of holy penance.

Here again let us compare this parable with the teachings of the sects; how many particulars must be changed in order to make it agree with their assertions! If the *goodman* and his *servants* planted the *good seed*, it was not an enemy or a different person who sowed the cockle among the wheat, but the servants themselves; moreover, when the blade *sprang* up and brought forth fruit there appeared also the cockle, which choked the good seed, so that for the space of a thousand years the field was covered with the cockle of popery, until at the end of the dark ages ("when men were asleep") there came Doctor Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, and all the other enlightened Reformers, and each one oversowed amongst the cockle his own particular kind of wheat, which also sprang up and brought forth fruit according to its kind; so that now, in our age of science and wisdom, the question as to what is wheat or what is cockle is altogether abandoned. Hence the general belief amongst the sects that on the day of the great harvest the *reapers* will not enquire of what denomination you are—Are

you wheat or cockle?—but will gather into the heavenly barn every sort of grain or weed that grew in the field and believed itself to be wheat. Such must necessarily be the sectarian version of this parable, if they are not deceived or do not deceive. Whereas the Catholic has nothing to change; every word of the parable is clearly verified in his Church and her teaching, as it was, as it now is, and will be to the end of ages.

SECTION III.

THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD-SEED.

"Another parable he proposed unto them, saying: The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Which is the least indeed of all seeds: but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come, and dwell in the branches thereof."—St. Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

CHAPTER I.

DIVINE ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT, AND CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH.

HAVING closely examined the first picture of the Church which our Lord has drawn and placed before us for our instruction in the parable of the *good seed,* every one that hath eyes to see and ears to hear must understand from it that the good seed so uniform throughout the field could be no other than the holy Catholic Church, which was first planted by Jesus Christ, the *goodman,* Himself, who preserves and governs it to the end of time. So, also, the cockle, so manifold in its kind, plainly represents the mass of errors that have divided all those who separated themselves from the Catholic Church into many

hundreds of sects, all naturally hostile to the good seed.

We are now about to take up another picture of the Church which the master-hand of the dear Saviour has also executed, and, after making the same comparison, we shall find, as before, the Catholic Church. Before doing so, however, I wish to remind my readers that I desire to see acknowledged the claims which the Catholic Church alone possesses of being the true Church of Jesus Christ—not as a mere favor, but from conviction, produced by a sincere and impartial examination of her faith and doctrine; not for our advantage or that of the Church, but for the sake of the souls concerned, that, after all, will be the real gainers or losers in the end, and whose salvation we most earnestly desire. Since God commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves, therefore we cannot remain unmoved at the sight of so many immortal souls in danger of perishing eternally, without at least giving a friendly warning, which, if accepted, will lead them securely to the happy mansions of the blessed. It is certainly as important for every non-Catholic to know and embrace the true Church as it is for every Catholic to live according to her teaching and persevere in her communion.

But let us return to our parable, which opens with these words: "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field." The man who is here represented as the owner of the *field* can be no other than our Lord Jesus Christ Himself; otherwise what relation could this parable have to the *kingdom of heaven?* It was this God made man who alone had the right and the power to establish a religion equally binding upon all

mankind, and forming the law by which He governs His Church on earth—the militant kingdom of heaven—which resembled the mustard-seed by its obscure and lowly beginning. For who could be less, in the eyes of worldly wisdom, than its Divine Founder and His twelve associates; He the son of a carpenter, as they said, not possessing even the necessaries of life, and they poor, unlettered fishermen? Nevertheless this mustard-seed took root and flourished, so that its branches reach to the very heavens. For this kingdom represented by the mustard-seed comprises three divisions, all attached to the same tree and holding intimate relations to each other. The first and most beautiful of these divisions constitutes all those who, having conquered their corrupt nature by a holy violence and overcome the seductions of the world, the flesh, and the devil, have already closed their earthly combat, and, called to the presence of their King, are crowned by Him as His faithful warriors, and, consequently, are termed the Church *triumphant.* The second are those who, though faithful, were not wholly free from blemish at the time of their departure from this life, but nevertheless will be saved, "yet so as by fire."* These constitute the Church *suffering.* The third portion of this great mustard-tree is that of the members of the true Church on earth, styled the Church *militant;* and these three parts of Christ's kingdom communicate with each other.

As for those who lived in opposition to the laws of God and His Church, and died without repentance, they are no longer members of the Church, but dead branches, cut off and cast into the "pool of fire, to

* 1 Cor. iii. 15.

be tormented, day and night, for ever and ever."* What a vast difference between the grain of "*mustard-seed*" and this full-grown tree! And yet there is nothing in the tree that had not its germ in the seed. The tree that rises so majestically above all the surrounding plants and herbs is the identical tree that was contained in the seed, no matter how small it may have been. And here is an answer for those persons who, wishing to justify their separation from the true Church, maintain that the present Catholic Church, although founded by Jesus Christ and His Apostles as the little mustard-seed, is no longer the same Church that it was in the days of the Apostles; that many powers have been usurped and exercised by the pope and his clergy which were never exercised in the primitive Church; that almost every century brings new innovations in matters of worship and discipline which are not mentioned in holy Scripture, and were not known among the first Christians.

That Christ granted special powers to His Apostles and their successors no man can deny who pretends to believe in the Bible. "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore," etc. "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you," for the same end, with the same powers. "To thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven," etc. † "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep." What these powers were, and the manner of exercising them, were certainly best known to those who received them, and were transmitted by them to their successors as "holy things not to be given

* Apoc. xx. 10, 15.

† St. Matt. xviii. 18; St. John xx. 21; St. Matt. xvi. 19.

to dogs, and as precious pearls not to be cast before swine." *

Suppose even that we were to grant—which by no means we could—that we have no evidence that these powers were ever exercised by the Apostles, this would prove nothing against the fact of their being granted by our Divine Lord to them and their successors; besides, no proof can be alleged to show that they were not enforced by the Apostles, as not all their actions have been recorded, but only a few of them. On the contrary, we have incontestable historical proof that these powers were exercised by the immediate successors of the Apostles, as well as by all those who came afterwards.

The true history of the Church beautifully illustrates the growth and development of the mustard-seed, and the exercise of those powers granted by Christ to the head of the Church and his subordinate aids, the bishops and priests, whenever an occasion required them. These powers, being given in general terms and to an unlimited extent, reaching as far as good and truth reaches, were also to be used with discretion, according to times and circumstances. Those charged with their administration were to be like St. Peter, "faithful and wise stewards whom the Lord hath set over His family, to give them their measure of *wheat*," † not at random nor at all times, in the same measure and indiscriminately, but "*in due season*." The sins of some were to be forgiven, those of others retained, etc.; at one time they should bind, at another loose. And so, as the Church grew and extended under more or less favorable circumstances not depending on her or

* St. Matt. vii. 6. † St. Luke xii. 42.

controlled by her laws, and according to wants and emergencies, these powers were used and made manifest to the world. She is, therefore, the Church of all ages, and bears the marks of every century of her life.

"*Out of the root of Jesse,*" which is the immaculate virgin Mother of God, "there *came forth a rod,*" * Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. This rod became the trunk of a tree through St. Peter and his successors, as vicars of Christ on earth. The nations converted to Christianity by the preaching of the Gospel form the branches, that bring forth leaves, flowers, and fruit as long as they remain united to the trunk, from which they derive nourishment, fecundity, and life. If some branches, exposed to a noxious air or perforated by the gnawing worm of predominant passion, have in course of time decayed, dried up, withered, and fallen off, or were cut off, these injured and destroyed themselves, but did not in any way hurt the main tree, which, in such cases, sprouted anew and brought forth young and vigorous branches instead, with fresh leaves and fruits, but never for an instant lost its innate vitality. To say that a tree a hundred years old is not the identical tree or plant which was first sown, and which produced this ancient tree, would be ridiculous, since it would imply that the seed never sprang up, and so the tree could have no origin.

If Jesus Christ never gave His Church any legislative power, and she exercised such power in succeeding ages, her identity might well be impugned nowadays; but if this power was given her at the very time of her foundation by Christ Himself, and

* Isaias xi. 1.

she makes use of such power after hundreds of years, because she had no need or opportunity of doing so before, no one can on this account deny her identity, or say she is not the same church or has no such power.

The little mustard-seed "when it is grown up is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree." Now, if the tree is the Church of Jesus Christ the herbs are her rivals, the sects—with this difference: that the tree was planted by *the man* in his field, whereas the herbs were planted by others or were the spontaneous productions of the soil. Therefore the tree is of heavenly origin, but the herbs earthly; and no matter how much these herbs may pretend to be the true Church, they bear too plainly the marks of falsehood: they are too small. For the marks of the true Church of Jesus Christ are not only unity, sanctity, apostolicity, but also universality, or catholicity. We have it from the lips of our Divine Lord Himself in this parable, where He shows us that His Church, once planted, shall flourish and exceed in numbers and magnitude all the rivals that surround her, and continue doing so till the end of time. No matter what heresies and schisms arose during almost nineteen hundred years of her existence, no matter how many thousands or millions of souls were torn from her maternal embrace, still the number of her faithful and devoted children far exceeded the measure of those "who revolted and remained no more in the doctrine of Christ" * as taught by her. And if we sum up together all denominations of Christians not Catholic, they do not amount to one-half the number of those who still hold and profess the Catholic faith.

* 2 Ep. St. John v. 9.

CHAPTER II.

THE NUMEROUS DIVISIONS AND CHANGES IN THE SECTS ARE A SUFFICIENT PROOF OF THEIR FALSITY.

IT is, I would say ridiculous, if it were not a deplorable evil, to hear every sect asserting that they themselves are the true Church of Jesus Christ, and the mother Church of Rome only a sect. You could say with as much truth that a branch cut from a tree and stuck in the earth was the original tree, and the tree itself only a rotten branch, as to say that the Catholic Church is not the only true and genuine Church of the living God. Oh! would to God our separated brethren would bear in mind this beautiful parable, and meditate seriously on the truths which it contains, that, being enlightened by heavenly wisdom, they might attain the gift of divine faith, without which it is impossible to please God.

What our Saviour said of the vine and its branches is also applicable here. The branch bears fruit if it remain attached to the vine; but, severed from the vine, it shall be cast forth as useless and shall wither, and they "shall gather it up and cast it into the fire."* "Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." Such shall be the fate of all herbs, the rivals of the mustard-tree.

I have taken the trouble to count up the number of sects that arose from the time of the Apostles to the time when Protestantism was started by Martin Luther (many of which are not recorded in history), and I found, on an average, a new sect for every third year; but who can count how many have arisen since

* St. John xv. 1, 6.

the time of Luther, even among Protestants themselves? Each of these started under the pretext of reformation, and each one claims to be the true Church of Christ and to believe in pure Gospel doctrine; whereas, in fact, they protest against the Church of the Gospel, and believe their own opinion about the Gospel, and that of the founders of their sects, in preference to the teachings of Jesus Christ Himself, who commanded all to "*hear the Church*" (meaning thereby His own Church), if they did not wish to be considered as "heathens and publicans."* Yet they prefer to hear any one but those to whom Christ said: "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me."† Our Lord permitted sects to arise, not because He considered them equal to the tree which came from the mustard-seed, for He has not planted them, and therefore they shall *be rooted up* when they have served His purpose; He merely allows them in order that the tree which He Himself has planted may stand forth more clearly. For, as St. Paul says: "There must be also heresies, that they also who are approved may be made manifest among you."‡ Those who serve the Lord sincerely and believe from their hearts stand firm in the faith originally "*handed down to the saints.*"§ Those who have no firm faith, having lost it by not performing the works it enjoins—for, as the Apostle tells us, "faith without good works is dead"—such persons fall away from the sound tree and go to the sects.

And as the mustard-tree always brings forth exactly the same fruit, so the Catholic faith, the true religion of Jesus Christ, will always bring forth Catholics of

* St. Matt. xiii. 17. † St. Luke x. 16. ‡ 1 Cor. xi. 19. § Jud. 3.

exactly the same faith as their ancestors. This cannot be said of the sects. If Martin Luther were now to come back to this world in person, how many would he find, even among his own Lutherans, who believe at the present day all that he taught them? Would he find among millions, each of whom is allowed the right of private judgment, and therefore his own opinion about the word of God—would he find, I ask, two persons who truly and sincerely think alike in matters of religion? Luther's remains were not yet mouldered into dust when the immortal Bossuet wrote his work on the *Variations of Protestantism*,* the very title of which would be a suitable epitaph on the tombstone of every Protestant sect. A religion whose variations in one century alone fill up three large volumes certainly cannot be the religion of an unchangeable God. And who will write for us the history of its variations from that time to the present day? How many volumes would such a history require?

Besides all this Catholics find in this parable another very beautiful and consoling dogma of their Church—namely, the *Communion of Saints:* not merely the communion of saints on earth with each other, but also that of the saints and angels in heaven with their brethren on earth. For it is said that this mustard-seed became a tree, and that the birds of the air came and dwelt in the branches thereof. Now let those who believe in no communion of saints but that which is found on earth spend their time in discussing what is meant by these *birds*

* A distinguished Protestant writer said of this work: "Catholics should read it to know their own religion, and Protestants should read it in order to learn logic."

of the air; they will probably find it difficult to draw any conclusion. But we Catholics are at no loss to find a meaning which satisfies and consoles us. Our faith teaches that death only breaks the ties of nature, but cannot sever the supernatural ties of divine faith, hope, and charity, with which, as members of the same body, the Church, we are linked together, and that our friends who departed this life in a state of grace continue to love us as faithfully and ardently—yes, even more so than before death, since they are more enlightened and have no passion or impediment to cool their love for us; for true charity is love in the highest sense of the word, and we read in holy Scripture that "God is love." If, in their charity, they loved to do us good on earth, and took care of our spiritual or temporal well-being, or of both, death will not hinder their good offices in our regard, but rather perfect that which before was imperfect.* And why should the saints (by saints

* That Luther believed in the communion of saints according to the Catholic sense of the word is evident from the following passage of his writings (tom. i., Jen., fol. 182): "So aber Gott auff dich siehet, so sehen ihm nach alle Engel, alle Heilige, alle Creaturen; und so du im Glauben bleibst, halten sie alle die Händ' unter, und gehet deine Seel aus, so sind sie da, und empfahen sie; du magst nicht untergehen." (If, then, God beholds you, so also do the angels and saints behold you; and if you persevere in the faith they support you, and when your soul departs they are present to receive it that you may not perish.) On fol. 183 he writes: "Er befiehlt seinen Engelen, allen Heiligen, allen Creaturen, dass sie mit ihm auf dich sehen, deine Seel wahrnehmen, und sie empfahen." (He commands His angels and saints, and all creatures, to watch over you with Himself, to watch your soul and receive it.) We also read at folio 165: "Von der lieben Heiligen Fürbitt sage ich, und halte Fest mit der ganzen Christenheit, dass man die liebe Heilige ehren, und anruffen soll: dan wer mag doch das widersprechen, dass noch heutiges Tages sichtiglich bey der lieben Heiligen Cörper und Gräber Gott durch seiner Heiligen Nahmen Wunder thut?" (I say and hold steadfastly in common with all Christians that the dear saints are to be honored and invoked. For we cannot contradict that even at the present day God works evident miracles through the invocation of His saints, and at the tombs which contain their bodies.) Speaking of the manner of administer-

we mean all who die in a state of sanctifying grace) be cut off from all those whom they loved on earth? Why should they be deprived of all power to do them good, since he who loves God most ardently in this life has also the greatest love for his neighbor? The love of the greatest saint for Almighty God during this life does not equal that of the least saint in heavenly glory; consequently the love of their neighbor must be immeasurably greater. On the other hand, what an idea of heaven Protestantism gives its followers! How cold and cheerless to think that the icy breath of heresy separates the living from the dead! No wonder that the poor negro who was urged by a Protestant preacher to go to heaven replied, after a moment's reflection: "Sir, I don't care much about going there, if I am to be stuck in a cloud to halloo out 'Alleluia!' for all eternity; I can see no fun in that." This poor man was not much mistaken, if the souls going there are shut up, if they are deprived of all power to aid their friends and benefactors, and obliged to forget all whom they loved on earth, even as Christ "loved His own that are in the world." In what does such a heaven differ from a prison? We know that the servant who has been faithful over few things shall be placed over many; that he who with one pound had gained ten pounds was told by the Lord, "Thou shalt have power over

ing the Blessed Sacrament, he says (tom. iii. fol. 160a): "Ists nicht gross und unaussprechliche Gnaad dass die hohe Majestät für mich tritt, sich auch mir zu eigen gibt; darnach, dass alle Heilige für mich tretten, nehmen sich meiner an, und sorgen für mich, dienen und helffen mir." (Is it not a great and ineffable grace that I can stand before the sublime Majesty of God and receive Him as my own; furthermore, that all the saints surround me, take my part, care, serve and help me?)

ten cities," and the one who had gained five pounds was placed by him over five cities. What is the meaning of this "having power over cities"? and where are these cities? Not in heaven, certainly, since there is there but one city—the heavenly Jerusalem—but on earth there are many cities, Christian cities, branches of the great tree which *the man* sowed in his field. No wonder that the saints and angels are delighted to come and *dwell in these branches,* and defend them from the noxious worms that destroy not only the leaf, the flower, and the fruit, but even the branches themselves, if not protected. It is an additional glory to the saints to be employed as the dispensers of God's treasures of goodness and mercy, and to have more power of doing good than they had in this world. If the angels of God know what takes place on earth, and see the face of our heavenly Father—for they even watch over us, and our Saviour Himself tells us, "See that you despise not one of these little ones: for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father who is in heaven" *—why not the saints of God who have departed this life and gone where, as the Scripture says, "they shall be like the angels of God"? † Why should these our friends in heaven be deprived of all knowledge of our concerns on earth, when we have positive proof that even the wicked in hell know our state on earth, as we see in the example of Dives and Lazarus? ‡ Dives in hell knew that his brothers whom he left on earth were still living, that they were not converted but continued their wicked life, and were in danger

* St. Matt. xviii. 10. † Ibid. xxii. 30. ‡ St. Luke xvi. 19.

of coming to that place of torment, where they would take fearful vengeance on him for the bad example and advice he had given them. Now, if this lost soul prayed to Abraham for his brothers on earth, whom he had both feared and hated, why should not the saints be able to do the same for those whom they loved on earth and still love better than before? Or shall we suppose that Almighty God, whom they behold face to face, thus addresses them: You are forbidden to think any more of those who were dear to you on earth, your friends, relatives—no, not even of your greatest benefactors, nor of those for whose benefit you sacrificed your life and all that you possessed. You can ask no favor in their behalf; they can ask the prayers of their friends on earth, but I forbid them to ask your prayers. You have no power to aid them any more. As a reward for all your good works on earth, now that you are in heaven you are for ever deprived of the power of doing good. The noble works of charity which you have established and fostered are taken out of your hands for ever; you shall not even know of their existence. The tears and supplications of suffering humanity, which you were accustomed to assuage by all the means in your power, may now fall upon the tombstone which marks your grave. You shall not heed them, much less lessen them. I have no more need of your services in the cause of your fellow-creatures; I do all without you.

Ah! my brethren, is that heaven? Is that the sentence of the just Judge? Is this our prospect, even if, with the grace of God, we succeed in imitating, as far as it is possible here below, His own infinite goodness, so that, like St. Paul, we are willing to be-

come "an anathema"* for our brethren, and when to do good to others has become our second nature —a want of the soul? That there is a chaos separating the reprobates from the saints we learn from the words of Abraham to Dives: "Between us and you there is fixed a great chaos: so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot, nor from thence come hither."† But that such a chaos should exist between heaven and earth is the doctrine of Protestantism, which styles itself the *pure gospel* (the good tidings)!

We can also draw from this parable another very useful and appropriate reflection. As the mustard-seed is used for two purposes, as a seasoning and as a remedy, so also is the word of God. It is the seasoning of all our actions, for all our thoughts, desires, and actions must be according to the teaching of divine faith and the dictates of conscience, in order to be pleasing in the sight of God; for "the just man liveth by faith," and "all that is not of faith is sin." Hence the Apostle says: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all for the glory of God." And as the mustard, taken with other meats, imparts a special savor to the food, and helps to give necessary and healthful action to the human body, so divine charity, which worketh by faith, adds a savor to all the actions of a God-loving soul and renders them profitable to salvation.

Moreover, a grain of mustard, if taken whole, affords little if any taste to the palate, but the more it is masticated the more it develops its virtue; so likewise the mere hearing of the divine truth will produce little or no effect in the soul, but the more

* Romans ix. 3. † St. Luke xvi. 26.

you meditate and think on it—which is spiritual mastication—the more will you taste and experience its salutary effects. "With desolation is the land made desolate, because there is no one that considereth in his heart." *

As a remedy mustard is used to restore the circulation of blood and impart new life to a limb or some other part of the human body where vitality is diminished; in like manner a good sermon, well pointed and applied to the sinner, will, like the strong mustard, draw tears from his eyes and bring the blush of shame to his cheek. Thus will the fire of divine charity produce new life and supernatural vitality in that almost dead member of Christ's body, the Church. Only take care to apply to yourselves, and not to your neighbors, the good sermons and instructions which you hear, and you will always experience the virtue and efficacy of that divine mustard-seed, the Church of Christ—His "kingdom, that shall never be destroyed nor be delivered to another people: and itself shall stand for ever." †

* Jer. xii. 11. † Dan. ii. 44.

SECTION IV.

THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN.

"Another parable He spoke to them: The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened."—St. Matt. xiii. 33.

CHAPTER I.

THE LEAVEN REPRESENTS THE DOCTRINE AND GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST—THE WOMAN WHO IMPARTS THE LEAVEN IS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BEFORE explaining this parable it is necessary to direct the reader's attention to another passage of the Gospel wherein our Divine Lord, always careful for His own, says: "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." * Here our Saviour tells us openly that the leaven indicated by Him is "the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees," † rejected and condemned by Him as a deceit and imposition. Therefore the leaven mentioned in the parable is His own divine doctrine, by which He endeavors to convert and save mankind.

The Pharisees were a sect amongst the Jews who professed a stricter observance of the law than the rest of the people. Besides the written law and

* St. Matt. xvi. 6. † Ibid. xvi. 12.

genuine traditions, never rejected by our Saviour, they had other laws and regulations, propagated through their sect, which they pretended were transmitted to them from Moses, and these they regarded with the same veneration as holy Scripture; nay, they even attached more importance to them than to the law itself (Mark vii. 9). Such traditions were condemned by Jesus Christ.

They were also remarkable for their extreme rigor in enforcing the observance of the Sabbath, and the Gospel records eight different occasions on which our Lord performed some work of charity on the Sabbath day purposely to shock their exaggerated notions, and teach them that this law was not to be enforced with such rigor.

They pretended, likewise, to believe firmly in Scripture, and in Scripture alone. Hence they would not listen to any living word, not even the living "*Word* of God" made man, though He was in their midst and spoke to them.

The Sadducees were simply unbelieving materialists, who denied the existence of the spirit and believed only in the happiness of the flesh.

From this we learn that the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees was misbelief and unbelief; therefore it is against these errors that our Divine Lord warned His followers—a warning which concerned more those who were afterwards to be converted to the true faith than those who were His contemporary disciples; for these were sufficiently guarded against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees by the visible presence of the divine Master Himself. But after He ascended into heaven, and the Church extended itself, this pernicious

leaven would be more dangerous as the natural evidence which aided the faith of the first disciples was withdrawn, and the whole edifice rested on divine faith alone.

Leaven is a substance, composed of meal or flour and water, which has passed into an acid state, and is used for making bread, imparting to it its savor and causing it to ferment, thus rendering it more palatable and fit for digestion. Bread is made from flour, flour is made from many grains ground together; and thus it is a figure of the Church, every member of which was a rude grain before baptism, but, ground by contrition and watered in the holy font of Baptism, it was mingled with the rest and leavened through and through with the divine leaven. The leaven mentioned in the parable is, therefore, the holy doctrine of Jesus Christ in all its power and efficacy.

"*The woman*" who took the leaven and used it is the spouse of Jesus Christ, His holy teaching Church. To her the heavenly leaven, the true doctrine of salvation, was entrusted: "Go ye, therefore, into the whole earth, preach the Gospel," etc. Hence if any one wishes to obtain the real, true leaven, and not a counterfeit prepared and offered by some Pharisee or Sadducee, he must apply to that woman, the true spouse of Jesus Christ, His Church, and not to any misbelieving Pharisee, no matter how sanctimonious and rigid an observer of the written law and traditions of his sect he may appear; nor to any unbelieving Sadducee, who preaches the emancipation of the flesh and lets the spirit perish. There are two sorts of leaven in the world—the leaven of Christ and that of the Pharisees and Sadducees. We must be leavened

by the first, if we desire to belong to the kingdom of heaven; but woe to him who is affected by the second! All the "woes" which Christ pronounced against the Pharisees will fall upon him.*

In this parable our Lord describes the process by which the nations of the earth, whom He came to redeem, were to be converted to His Church, and made "*one bread, one body*" † with Him who is the *Living Bread.*

The meal represents all mankind, that still retained after its fall the three natural faculties of intellect, memory, and will, that were to be reformed and made to partake of *God's divine nature.* Meal in its natural condition is insipid, and unfit for nourishment without some preparation. In like manner man after his fall was no longer agreeable to God's taste; the leaven—that is, the divine element of supernatural light and grace in His intellect, memory, and will—was lost by sin; he no longer possessed that sweet savor of sanctifying grace that made him pleasing to God. His children also were outcasts from their heavenly country; they were, as St. Paul says, "by nature children of wrath." ‡

Man in his integrity, before the fall, was *wheat,* "*the good seed.*" After his fall he had to become wheat in order to be saved—that is, ground by contrition and watered in holy baptism, where he received the divine leaven of grace and the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and charity, every succeeding grace increasing the vigor and strength of that leaven and making the whole mass of meal fit to become

* St. Matt. xxiii. 14 *et seq.;* St. Luke xi. 42–44.
† 1 Cor. x. 17. ‡ Eph. ii. 3.

bread. And what is meant by this bread? Behold a question which none but a Catholic can answer.

There is a great mystery contained in the words wheat, bread, church, and "body of Christ." These words are used in holy Scripture sometimes so promiscuously, one for the other, that it might appear they mean one and the same thing. For instance, we read in Jeremias (xi. 19) where the prophet introduces the enemies of Christ conspiring against Him: "Let us put wood upon His bread, and cut Him off from the land of the living"—a passage which the English Protestant Bible gives quite differently, for there we read: "Let us destroy the tree with the fruits thereof."

Now, St. Jerome, who has himself translated the ancient Testament from Hebrew into Latin, and had no Protestant opinions to controvert, as he lived nearly a thousand years before Protestantism was begun—St. Jerome, who gives the text as it stands in the approved Catholic translation, explains it to us in this way: by the *wood* is understood the *cross*, and by *His bread* is meant the Body of Jesus Christ. Therefore the words signify, "Let us nail His body to the cross," for the bread which Jesus Christ gave is "His flesh for the life of the world"; hence it is that His body can also be called His bread. And as the first Protestant Reformers could make nothing of this text without acknowledging the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence, they thought it best to do away with it altogether, and give us a meaning in their translation, which was not as old as the goose-quill that wrote the sentence. So much for their faithful translation of the sacred Scriptures from the original Hebrew! No wonder that Catholics do not want to

read their Bible, stained and corrupted with the leaven of the Pharisees.

St. Paul also speaks in the same manner: "We being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread"; * and in the preceding verse he says: "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of the Lord? and the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" † Catholics, with the Corinthians and all Christian sects that are not Protestants, answer: Of course it is. Protestantism alone says: No, it is not. In his Epistle to the Colossians he calls the Church of Christ the body of Christ: "I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh for His body, which is the Church." ‡

Hence the great St. Ignatius, martyr and successor of St. Peter in the apostolic chair of Antioch, being on his way to Rome to be devoured by wild beasts, writes thus to the afflicted children of his church: "I am the wheat of Christ. I am to be ground by the teeth of lions, that I may become the bread of Christ." This sort of language was very familiar to the first Christians; hence only Catholics can understand it.

If the leaven mentioned in the parable be the holy

* 1 Cor. x. 17. † Ibid. x. 16.

‡ Col. i 24.—NOTE. The Protestant Bible has: "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." What is wanting of the sufferings of Christ is our own suffering in the Church, for the Apostle says: "If we have suffered with Him, we shall be glorified with Him"; and we can suffer and do penitential works not only for ourselves, but also for other members of the Church. The Protestant Reformers denied the necessity of penitential works, hence they translate, "that which is behind." What is wanting is not left behind, and what is behind of the "afflictions of Christ" is infinite and needs no filling up.

doctrine of Christ, with all the powers and graces which it confers—or, in other words, the divine element wherewith our Saviour wants to regenerate and reconstruct our fallen nature, and place us once more in the rank of supernatural beings from which we fell by sin—then this divine leaven must not remain separated from us or be kept carefully within the cover of a book; no, it has to be "hid in three measures of meal until the whole is leavened."

If you put leaven into meal you do not expect the leaven to change into meal, but the meal itself to be leavened and take the taste and quality of the leaven. Now, a similar process takes place in the conversion of nations or individuals to Christianity; for let us return to the time of the Apostles, and see how they *hid this leaven in the three measures of meal.* How did they proceed to make converts? It was not by distributing copies of the Bible, and telling them to "Go and read, examine for yourselves; believe in the Redeemer; and as for His doctrines, take those which you understand and as you understand them, and never mind the rest." No; the Apostles, like their Divine Lord and Master, preached by word of mouth—preached and made converts, nay, even saints—before the first syllable of the New Testament was written. They preached what they heard from the lips of Jesus Himself; not different opinions of their own about the word of God, nor different doctrine like the sectarian preachers and founders of heresies, but, as St. John tells us, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, we declare unto

you, that you also may have fellowship with us." * The Apostles announced a positive, objective truth, and, after the example of our Divine Lord, required, as the first and most essential condition on the part of all admitted to their society, a firm and unflinching faith in the dogmas they proposed—a plan which their successors have continued and will continue to the end of time.

Who can imagine for a moment that the Apostles, who were sent, not to stir up questions and cause quarrels and dissensions, but to teach men what they had to believe and do in order to be saved—who can suppose that they would admit into the membership of the Church any one who, believing in Christ, accepted some of His doctrines which they preached, and obstinately rejected the others because they did not suit his notions, or because he did not understand them; or one who said to them: I will believe your word, provided you leave me at liberty to understand it my own way, and not bind my intellect to believe things about which I have formed ideas quite different from yours?

The Apostles knew as well as we do that the doctrine of Christ was given as a law and guide to guard our understanding against opposite errors, to set it in undisturbed possession of the truth, and at the same time to do homage to the wisdom and truth of the Almighty. Hence it is that we are ready at any time to sacrifice our very lives, when necessary, in testimony of the faith which we profess. Thus it is that the Church presents to God her glorious army of martyrs in every age, and clime, and people; the young, the noble, the learned, the beautiful are

* 1 St. John i. 1-3.

gathered amongst those royal heroes who, like their Redeemer, conquered death and hell by dying, bearing in mind the words of Christ: "He that believeth not shall be condemned." * *Why?* Because he that *believeth not* prefers his own private judgment to the judgment of God, and thinks his own private opinion more worthy of belief than the truths revealed by God; hence he denies what God asserts, and asserts what God denies; thus, instead of rendering homage to God's veracity by an humble submission of his judgment, he follows the example of Eve, who believed the serpent rather than God, and renders homage to the veracity of his own fallible judgment at the risk of sacrificing the divine truths of religion, his only means of salvation.

The Apostles, then, made converts and hid the leaven of divine truth in the meal of men's understanding, not by giving up this truth to the cavils of human reasoning and the private judgment of every individual, so that every one might form the opinion he thought proper, but by the duty of *faith*, which already, by the law of nature, binds every man to believe firmly whatever God has said, without even power to doubt such truths, much less to contradict them.

CHAPTER II.

HOW THE DIVINE LEAVEN OPERATES ON THE HUMAN SOUL.

THE leaven of divine truth must first be applied to the memory of man, which has to learn what God has taught and revealed; then the intel-

* St. Mark xvi. 16.

lect, being once convinced that those who announce these truths are delegates from God, Christ's ambassadors, hesitates not to believe their word, complying with their teaching just as if the Son of God Himself spoke to them in person; for has He not said: "He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me"?* Hence, to use the words of St. Paul, it is only when "created understanding is thus brought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ"† that a man is a believer and can be admitted to holy baptism, by which he becomes a living member of Christ's body, *the Church.* The divine truth has to affect the erring intellect of man; it has to form it and keep it within its proper limits. Whenever this restless power is in danger of going astray, the memory, which holds possession of truth, will call it back, saying, as it were: "Not so, my intellect; God has said this or that. Thou art mistaken in thy own conceit; *this* is the truth which thou must follow." From this we can easily conceive how the sacred writers could say of the first Christians: They were all "*of the same mind,*" and all had "*the same faith,*" as they had the same "*God*" and the same "*baptism.*"‡ For what they believed was not the dictates of human wisdom, but "the wisdom of God in a mystery,"§ which was preached to them, "not in the persuasive words of human eloquence," like a thesis of philosophy, which must be proved by argument before being admitted; but as a faith revealed by God, which they had to believe or incur the penalty of disobedience to their Sovereign Lord and Creator. And as there was but one set of truths revealed by Jesus Christ and

* St. Luke x. 16. † 2 Cor. x. 5. ‡ Eph. iv. 5. § 1 Cor. ii. 2.

preached by the Apostles, so all their disciples believed the same, and had the same divine *faith*. This faith did not extinguish natural reason or hinder its further progress; but every dogma was an infallibly true principle, from which every sound reasoning on the subject had to come in order to prove that it was true. There prevailed amongst all but one idea concerning the same revealed truth, consequently but one and the same faith.

It is a certain fact that the divine leaven of truth, when communicated to the mind of an unbeliever or misbeliever, *causes a fermentation*. The mind is aroused from that deadly lethargy in which it was slumbering; because before that epoch it was only meal, insipid meal, and now the leaven acts upon it, pervading all its thoughts and ideas, purifying it from error, and never rests *until the whole is leavened*—that is to say, until all its views coincide with those of Christ—except the fermentation be suppressed by force; then you have a mass of substance which is neither meal nor leaven, and wholly unfit for use. Thus you see the whole process is progressive, admitting one Catholic principle, through which the intellect is forced by the strictest logic to admit the whole Catholic doctrine.

This divine leaven not only operates on our memory and intellect, but also on our will and its inferior affections, the passions. By the light of faith we are guided to the channels of grace opened to us in the holy sacraments, by which our will, naturally inclined to evil, obtains supernatural aid and strength to accomplish that which is good. These graces are sweet motions, certain helps, imparted to the will in order to enable it to

do what divine faith commands; they strengthen the will in its struggles against the violent passions that "wage war in our *members*" *—a fact which caused St. Paul to say, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." †

Thus the divine leaven produces in man a thorough transformation; and the more he imbibes it and suffers it to penetrate him in all his desires, actions, and words, the more perfect he becomes. Then may he say with the Apostle: "I live, but now not I: but Christ liveth in me." ‡ The whole man is changed; all in him is spiritualized, and sends forth the sweet odor of that holy leaven which works within him. His intellect is illumined by the light of divine faith, every dogma of which is to his memory a treasure of infallible knowledge infinitely safer and more reliable than all the reasonings of the most distinguished human minds; his will, strengthened and purified by divine grace, is conformed in all things to the will of God; his views are enlarged, his aspirations loftier, and his whole nature sanctified by grace; he is a supernatural man, as Adam was in Paradise before his fall.

Now, if we apply this parable to the Protestant system of doctrine we shall have to change it completely, and say: *The kingdom of heaven is likened to leaven,* not *which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal,* but which every man that knows how to read, himself takes and turns into meal. As they do not believe in the infallibility of a teaching Church, there can be no place for the "woman"

* St. James iv. 1. † Phil. iv. 13. ‡ Gal. ii. 20.

mentioned in the parable. As every individual is declared to be his own proper judge in interpreting the holy Scriptures, then, all church authority ceases, and is as fallible as that of any private individual. Hence, as a private individual, my opinion may be just as good as, and perhaps even better than, that of the whole fallible multitude. But in this case the very possibility of divine faith, *without which it is impossible to please God,* ceases, and all collapses into mere human opinions. For faith, in the strict logical sense of the word, signifies the firm assent of the mind to something which another asserts. I believe and I have faith in what another has told me. What I see with my own eyes and comprehend with my understanding, or what I have learned by experience, I do not, strictly speaking, *believe,* but I *know* it. Faith rests on authority; knowledge on interior or exterior evidence. My faith is *reasonable* when I have good solid authority for believing; my faith is *human* if the authority on which I rest my belief is human authority. But, even if I have divine authority for believing some particular truth, still I cannot make an act of *divine faith* without the special grace of God, which enlightens and moves my mind to a thorough assent in the truth which He has revealed. And as God does not give grace to err, nor to doubt His word, nor believe in human assertions, but grace to believe firmly the truths which He has revealed and as He revealed them, hence it follows that where everything amounts to nothing more than a *mere opinion,* which does not exclude error nor remove doubt, there can be no act of *divine faith* such as

is essential for salvation, and by which "the just man liveth." *

Let a man read—yes, let him commit to memory, if he can—the whole Bible; let him bear it in mind day and night; let his speech be clothed in the identical words of Holy Writ; he would perform an astonishing feat of memory, but he would not on this account have *divine faith.* He would have the *dead "letter* that *killeth,* but not the spirit that *quickeneth* and animateth the letter." † It is not the letter, but the true meaning attached to the letter, which is required for making an act of faith; and the meaning which he attaches to the letter, as long as he rejects the authority of the Church, the divinely-appointed teacher of truth, will never amount to more than *human opinion,* whether it be his own private opinion or that of his sectarian clergyman, or of the synod or of the founder of his sect, all of whom are as fallible as himself.

St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, speaks thus: "The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand because it is spiritually examined. But the spiritual man judgeth all things: and he himself is judged of no man." ‡ Here the Apostle distinguishes between the sensual and spiritual man. The sensual man is he that tests everything by the testimony of the senses—that is, by his natural faculties of knowledge. But there is a higher order of knowledge than that of the sensual man—namely, spiritual intelligence, which belongs to the spiritual man, who believes things that do not fall under the testimony of the senses, but are of

* Heb. x. 38. † 2 Cor. iii. 6. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

a higher order, and can only be *spiritually examined* by him who is already spiritual—that is to say, enlightened by the divine light of faith.

Now, any one who attempts to form his own religion or creed with no guide or teacher but the dead letter of the Bible—which in this case he supposes gratis to be the word of God—with no other light than that of his own reason and senses, how much or how little soever that may be, places himself in the position of that sensual man spoken of by St. Paul. What he understands he accepts; what he does not he rejects, or at least passes over it as not necessary, if he does not go a step lower and laugh at it or ridicule it as foolishness. He forms his own private opinion on what he accepts and what he rejects, and the collection of his own opinions forms his creed, his religion. But who does not see that thus he transforms the divine-given truth, which should be accepted and believed in the one true sense in which it was revealed, into a mere human opinion; in other words, he changes the *leaven* into *meal*, but not the meal into leaven? "The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" * (Jesus Christ Himself informs us that there are mysteries in His religion: "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven")—these mysteries are truths revealed by God which our limited understanding cannot comprehend. If they could be comprehended or understood by us they would cease to be mysteries. But Protestantism does away with mysteries, and boasts of teaching nothing but what is plain, open, clear. What a fearful admission! These mysteries must be believed. Our limited understanding is as little

* St. Matt. xiii. 11.

adapted to scrutinize them as the naked eye is to gaze on the sun at noonday; if firmly believed they explain each other, and have, if *spiritually examined*, the most intimate connection with each other; and whereas the sensual man that has no faith but only private opinion for his guide finds nothing but absurdities and matter for scoff and silly ridicule, the *spiritual man*, who *examines* these mysteries spiritually, discovers in them the most astonishing manifestations of the omnipotence, goodness, and mercy of an infinitely-loving and bountiful God.

The spiritual man, believing with divine faith in the mysteries of religion, is not debarred the free exercise of his natural faculties of reasoning. "The spiritual man judgeth all things," but now no more in the dim light of natural fallible understanding, but in the divine light of supernatural faith which is superadded to the light of his natural intelligence. With this gift he thinks as God thinks concerning these revealed doctrines; he judges as God judges; and as the judgments of God are often different from those of men, it is no wonder that "*the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*," * and the wisdom of God foolishness with the world.

If Catholicity has labored during nineteen centuries to raise fallen man from the state of degradation and sensuality into which sin had plunged him, by implanting in his heart that heavenly wisdom which enabled him to receive those sublime truths which she learned from her divine Founder Himself, and which will be preserved in her for all ages to come by the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of truth abiding with her for ever," † it was reserved for Protestantism to

* 1 Cor. iii. 19. † St. John xiv. 16.

abolish this heavenly wisdom and do away with one mystery after another, so as to bring down every divine revelation to the mere level of natural truth, assigning to Jesus Christ, at most, a place among the philosophers of His age, if not amongst the impostors!

"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." *

* St. Matt. xvi. 6.—NOTE. Remarkable enough is the following quotation from Luther's *Kirchen Postille* (Explanations of the Gospel), page 92, published at Wittenberg in 1580, concerning the tradition of the Church and private judgment: "Die Christliche Kirche behält nu alle Wort in ihrem Hertzen und bewegt dieselbe, helt sie gegeneinander, und gegen die Schrifft. Darumb wer Christum finden soll, der musz die Kirche am ersten finden. Wie wollt man wissen, wo Christus wäre, wenn man nicht wüste, wo seine Gläubige sind? und wer etwas von Christo wissen will, der musz nicht ihm (sich) selbst trauen, noch eine eigene Brücken in den Himmel bauen durch seine eigene Vernunft, sondern zu der Kirchen gehen, dieselbe besuchen und fragen. Nu ist die Kirche nicht Holz und Stein, sondern der Hauff Christgläubiger Leuthe. Zu denen musz man sich halten, wie die Gläubige leben, und lehren; die haben Christum gewisslich bei sich. Den ausser der Christlichen Kirchen ist kein Wahrheit, kein Christus, keine Seeligkeit." (Now, the Christian Church retains all words in her heart, considers and compares them with each other, as also with the Scriptures. Therefore whoever wants to find Christ must first find the Church. How could a man know where Christ is without knowing where His followers are? And whoever wants to know something about Christ must not trust himself, nor build his own bridge to heaven with his own reason, but must visit and ask the Church. Now, the Church is not a building of wood and stone, but the assembly of faithful Christian people. He must keep with these, and live and teach as they do; for most assuredly Christ is with them, and outside of the Christian Church there is no truth, no Christ, no salvation.)

SECTION V.

THE TREASURE IN THE FIELD.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field: which a man having found, hideth, and for joy thereof goeth, and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."—St. Matt. xiii. 44.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH AND HER TREASURE.

IN this parable our Saviour represents to us a man who has found the true Church, and in this Church the treasure of divine truth and grace deposited therein by her founder, Jesus Christ. Our Lord also gives us to understand that there are other fields in which there is no treasure, so that they are worthless when compared to that which contains the precious treasure. Now, as it is not sufficient for a man to know that there exists a field containing a rich treasure, without knowing at the same time what particular field it is, in like manner it is not enough to know that there is a Church wherein Christ has deposited His saving grace and doctrine; he must also know which, among so many rival churches, is the true one where this great treasure is deposited. Moreover, it does not suffice to know which is the field that contains the treasure, or which

is the true Church of Jesus Christ—its possession must also be secured; and if it costs all a man has it is never bought too dearly, wherever it is found. Other fields may yield their best productions, but this field, besides bringing forth good fruit, contains a treasure infinitely more valuable than all the gold of California and Australia.

What would an enterprising American leave undone in order to secure the possession of a piece of land—no matter where it was situated, provided only it was at all accessible—had he sufficient proof that the land in question contained an inexhaustible mine of gold and precious stones, which could be reached at any time he undertook to explore the mine? Most assuredly he would act like the man mentioned in the parable. For joy he would go and sell *all that he hath*, and run into debt if necessary, in order to buy that field; and having found the treasure *hidden in the field*, he would make no stir about his discovery before he had bought and secured certain possession of the field. Little would he care what people said, even if they laughed at him, and if the newspapers, always interested in such events, pronounced him a maniac who wasted his property in order to purchase an apparently ordinary piece of land, when he might purchase at the same price whole sections of exquisite soil. Even if this field were in a distant country under a despotic government, he would waive the question of liberty and exile for a time, his mind being too much engrossed with the idea of securing his treasure to allow any other concern to trouble him. He would persistently seek for it at any cost, secure its possession, and afterwards enjoy his precious treasure at home in the land of the free.

Now, behold! there is actually in the world such a field with such a treasure; our Saviour Himself assures us of it; but he that finds it and wishes to possess it must give "all he has" in exchange for it. Whether that "all" be much or little, provided only that it be *all*, it will be given to him, and he will be made at once a rich man in time and eternity.

Where, then, is this field? And in what field is this priceless treasure? There are so many fields in the world, and only one of them contains the hidden treasure. Where is it? I answer: Ask history. The treasure was hidden in that field by the Son of God made man; it is the same field wherein He sowed the *good seed* and planted the *mustard-tree* which became *larger than all the herbs.* Any other field that was not under cultivation at the time the *good man* was on earth personally to cultivate it, cannot be that field. It is His own particular field; there He sowed the *good seed* and hid the treasure of heavenly grace and truth. If you spend all you possess in buying other fields than this one you suffer loss; the loss of that treasure in the field is a greater loss for you than if you owned and lost the entire universe. He Himself, the infinitely great God, had to give all He had to purchase it for us: "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. . . . He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross."* No wonder, then, that He requires also all *we* have in exchange for such a treasure.

This valuable treasure is hidden "from the wise and prudent"† of this world, who think it an ab-

* Phil. ii. 6–8. † St. Matt. xi. 25.

surdity and folly to sacrifice material goods for spiritual, the temporal for the eternal, the present for the future, to give up one's own views and will for the views and will of Almighty God, present pleasures and comforts for future ones, or to renounce the honors of this world for the everlasting delights and honors of the world to come; but this treasure is "revealed to little ones" who do not consider themselves too great or intelligent to be taught by any one whom God may appoint to teach them, and are willing to give whatever they possess in this life in order to secure the never-ending pleasures of eternity. "I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth," prayed the Saviour of the world, "because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones";* and again He says: "Amen, I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." † Now, if *the treasure in the field* is revealed to such little ones, I am happy to say these little ones are the faithful children of the Catholic Church. For if the Catholic is distinguished from the Protestant by believing more than the Protestant believes—therefore by credulity—the Protestant differs from the Catholic by not believing enough—therefore by incredulity. Children are naturally credulous; a child will always believe what its parents say, no matter what others may say to the contrary, for the simple reason that father or mother said so; and if the parents are upright, pious Christians, and the child continues subject to their government, there is no doubt but the child will also be a good Christian. This faith of the

* St. Matt. xi. 25. † Ibid. xviii. 3.

child is a source of bliss for it, as it was for our first parents in Paradise; they were happy as long as they believed what God had said to them, but fell and ruined themselves when they gave up this childlike faith and doubted about the word of their heavenly Father. This simple faith Jesus Christ required from His followers from the very beginning. As they believed in "God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, and in the Holy Ghost," so also they were required to believe in the *holy Catholic Church.* They were taught to believe and obey the holy Catholic Church, as they believed and obeyed God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and as they were taught to look upon God as their father, so they were taught to regard the Church as their mother. Wherefore St. Cyprian writes: "No one can have God for a father who has not the Church for his mother." As long as the children of the Church with childlike simplicity believed and obeyed their mother while absent from their Father there was peace and happiness amongst them; they worked together all day in the same field of the Father and enriched themselves with its hidden treasures; but when some became ungovernable and revolted against their mother, refusing to believe or obey her any longer, and even went so far as to calumniate and despise her, pretending to know the will of the Father better than she did, and, taking with them a printed copy of the title-deed of the true field (*the Bible*), went to look for other fields, then peace and harmony were at an end and strife and discord prevailed—not amongst those who continued faithful to their mother, but amongst the seceders, who settled down

on different fields, and commenced quarrelling among themselves concerning the meaning of their title-deed and who amongst them possessed the true field; disagreeing in all matters, yet united in one point—that is to say, a steadfast denial that the field of their former mother is the genuine field containing the treasure. Yes, so blinded as to persuade themselves that the farther they separated themselves from the field of their mother the more treasure they obtained.

Moreover, Catholics believe in *a treasure of the Church*, consisting of the infinite satisfaction and merits of Jesus Christ, and the limited though still copious satisfaction and merits of the Virgin Mother of God and of numberless other saints, which form a precious treasure that Christ has left to His Church, with power to dispense it to the faithful in the form of indulgences, to which they, as well as the suffering souls in purgatory that are "saved, yet as by fire,"* are entitled by the "Communion of Saints" taught in the Apostles' Creed; and in this sense also the parable represents Catholic, not Protestant, teaching, since Protestants deny altogether the existence of such a treasure.

But supposing that Protestants knew what is the *field* and the *treasure* mentioned in the parable; they cannot say—even the most sincere, the most pious and devoted among them—that they give *all they have* in exchange for it. They may give property and talent, time and labor—yea, even their very lives and all they hold dear in life—for the gospel of Jesus Christ; still they cannot say, "We have given all," as long as they reserve to themselves their *private judgment* and refuse to *hear the Church* which

*1 Cor. iii. 15.

Christ commanded them to hear, as well as us, thereby "bringing into subjection their own understanding unto the obedience of Christ."* The principal, the most noble part of the sacrifice—that of the understanding—the one most pleasing to Almighty God, they refuse to make; and, though having left all for Christ's sake, they did not leave their own opinion, their own private judgment; hence they never can say with the Apostles: "Behold we have left all things and have followed thee."† They must modify the saying in this manner: "We have left all things except the right—if we ever had any before God—to our own private opinion, no matter how far opposed to the doctrines of Jesus Christ; we have not followed Christ, and His Church which was to teach us in His place, but we followed those who went away from that Church—'Speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.'‡ We believe that Christ said to the pastors of His Church: 'Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world,'§ and that the Spirit of Truth would abide with them for ever; but we do not believe that He accomplished His promise. We prefer to believe what those who revolted said and taught us to believe—namely, that Christ and the Spirit of Truth remained with that Church, not till the end of time, as He said, but only for four or five hundred years, and then abandoned it to vice and error, until the Reformers rose up and started, not one, but many churches in place of that ancient one founded by Christ and His Apostles. In these churches every one is free to believe as he will respecting the teachings of Christ, taught by the *Spirit of Truth*—con-

*2 Cor. x. 5. † St. Matt. xix. 27. ‡ Acts xx. 30. § St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

sequently, *all truth*—if he only be sincere and pray fervently, although no two may believe alike. And even if the writings of the earliest Fathers of the Church and all historical monuments prove that the Catholics of our day believe exactly what the first Christians believed, it is little matter to us; we had rather believe what the founders of our sect and our ministers say; and we cannot and will not give up our own opinion." Now, does a man of such sentiments "give all that he has"? And here I may be allowed to ask: How can any sincere Protestant believe that he loves his God with his *whole heart* when his heart is so attached to his sect and whatever binds him to it? How does he love God with his *whole soul* when he refuses to give Him the noblest part—the understanding—which should submit to faith and not master it? How does he love God with *all his mind* when his mind is so divided that, even if he admits that God has given a revelation, he still keeps his own mind about what this revelation demands and signifies? How does he love his God with *all his strength* when he is unwilling to employ that strength in *bringing into captivity* his proud *understanding unto the obedience of Christ*, but makes use of all his mind and strength to resist the authority of those whom "the Holy Ghost has placed bishops to rule the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood"?*

Love does not consist in words, but in a communication of the goods we possess. If, then, God so loves us as to give us Himself with all that He has, it is no wonder that He requires man to make Him

* Acts xx. 28.

the only return which is in his power to make to His infinite goodness—his own limited self. My saying stands firm: "Unless a man renounce all that he possesseth he cannot be My disciple." * But this *whole self* is not given and this renouncement is not made when something is reserved; hence even the most learned and pious Protestants, the most strict observers of the law, who keep to themselves a right of private judgment, cannot expect to possess God. "Whosoever revolteth, and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." †

Now, were I to adapt this parable to Protestantism, I should have to alter it in this way: The kingdom of heaven is likened to as many fields as there are Protestant sects, in which there is no *hidden treasure* —for nothing is hidden in Protestantism; all is plain to the limited judgment of man, and whatever had the appearance of mystery or was unintelligible is done away with or passed over. To purchase one of these fields a man can give whatever he chooses. There are enough of such fields in the market to suit every one's taste; and if those in existence will not suit him he can start a field of his own. He is as much entitled to his own opinion as the first Reformers were. He need not be troubled about the price; he will pay dear enough for it in eternity.

* St. Luke xiv. 33. † 2 Ep. St. John 9.

SECTION VI.

PARABLE OF THE PEARLS.

"Again the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls. Who when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it." —St. Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

CHAPTER I.

ALL THE MEANS OF GRACE AND PIOUS PRACTICES IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ARE SO MANY PRECIOUS PEARLS WHICH SHE BESTOWS ON HER FAITHFUL CHILDREN.

IF Protestantism has no claim to the preceding parable of the treasure in the field it has much less in the present case. Its fundamental principle of salvation by faith alone, and its denial of the necessity of good works, exclude at once every idea of that spiritual traffic in which a man has to give all in order to obtain all. According to their notion man has nothing to give; he may keep all he has and could give to himself; he has only to have faith in Christ, and he is entitled to the possession of all which Christ is able and willing to give. There are no "good pearls" which he has to purchase, but only one "pearl of great price" to him, and this is

his own salvation; this he hopes to obtain, not by selling all he has and buying it, but by believing in Him who gave all He had, even His life, to purchase it for him.

But the Catholic knows that there are many other beautiful pearls, besides this pearl of faith in Christ, wherewith he is to be adorned in his heavenly home, all of which Christ purchased with His sacred blood and deposited in His Church. And although the Saviour of the world purchased them for all of us from His heavenly Father, yet only those who purchase them from Him, by giving all for all, will obtain their actual possession. In other words, our salvation and spiritual perfection, and consequently our future glory, require our co-operation with all the graces and gifts of God by a life of labor, of suffering, and of sacrifice, walking in the footsteps of Christ according to the measure of grace given us by Him who labored, suffered, and sacrificed Himself for us. For which reason St. Augustine says: "He that created thee without thee, will not save thee without thee"; following in this the Apostle St. Paul, who said: "If we have suffered with Him we shall be also glorified with Him."* And St. James says: "Faith without good works is dead."† St. Peter also speaks in the same sense: "Wherefore, brethren, labor the more, that by good works you make sure your calling and election."‡ But now to the parable itself.

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls." Every true Christian must, in a spiritual sense, be a merchant; he must give in order to receive: material goods for spiritual, tem-

* Rom. viii. 17. † St. James ii. 20. ‡ 2 Ep. St. Peter i. 10.

poral for eternal, the perishable things of time for the never-ending bliss of heaven. The merchant who seeks *good pearls* knows well that there are also many spurious counterfeit pearls in the market; and as it would be a great loss to him to spend all his wealth in the purchase of a pearl which after all would turn out not to be a good, genuine pearl, so also it is an immense loss to give one's whole life and time and labor for a religion which, after all, is not the true religion of Jesus Christ, but only its counterfeit.

Only think of the disappointment of a merchant who has spent all his money and means to buy a pearl, by the sale of which he expects to make a fortune; but behold, when he presents it for sale it is found to be nothing but glass! He is indeed a ruined man; and so is every man who professes a false religion and spends his whole life and talents in its defence and support. He will find, when too late, that it is nothing more than a pearl of glass, of no value whatever in the sight of God. It may pass for a good pearl in this life among those who know not what a good pearl is; but it will not pass in the next world, where "the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is." *

In order to be sure that the pearl we purchase with all our wealth is a *good pearl,* we must have a good knowledge of pearls; and if we ourselves do not possess this knowledge we must rely on the judgment of *trustworthy* persons who have this knowledge. There are many impostors in the world who are intent on making money—honestly, if they can; but, if not, to make it somehow at the expense of

* 1 Cor. iii. 13.

the unsuspecting and unwary—and who run from house to house and swear that the bead of glass which they offer for sale is a real pearl, although they never possessed one in their lives, nor even the means to purchase one good pearl. Now, as Almighty God wants us to be merchants dealing in pearls, He cannot have left us without a certain and infallible method whereby we can discover the *good pearls.* He must have established an authority on earth which cannot err, and which has a full knowledge of such matters, in order to direct our choice in this important affair. And certainly He has done so; for what better and surer authority can be desired than the authority of those to whom Jesus Christ has entrusted these precious, heavenly pearls, that they may dispense them all over the world, till the end of time, to those whom they find worthy to receive them, and who are willing to comply with the conditions required for their purchase? Christ Himself said to His Apostles and their successors: "Give not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and turning upon you tear you." * Hence St. Paul says: "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God. Here now it is required among the dispensers: that a man be found faithful." † Now, these *faithful dispensers* were not only necessary in the times of Christ and His Apostles, as these holy things, these *good pearls,* were not destined merely for their contemporaries, but for all future generations, who were also to be instructed by "faithful men who were able to instruct others." ‡ These

* St. Matt. vii. 6. † 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 2.

"faithful men" are not travelling preachers and peddlers who travel over land and sea to distribute tracts and Bibles, no matter to whom, "casting pearls before swine and giving a holy thing to dogs," but they are men whom the Holy Ghost hath chosen and placed "bishops to rule the Church of God," * headed and united by St. Peter and his successors, —that "faithful and wise steward whom the Lord hath set over his family." † They have received not only the ministry "of the Word" of God, which Protestant ministers also claim, but the "dispensation of the mysteries of God," which most of these ministers discard, as they want no mysteries nor any of those truths which surpass their limited understanding. These *mysteries*, which some sectarians regard as mummeries and nonsense, are inestimably *good pearls* in the eyes of the Church, which has received them as a precious treasure from her divine founder, Jesus Christ, together with the knowledge of the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven"; whereas to those that are outside this knowledge is "not given." ‡

What are these mysteries? What are these *good pearls?* They are not only every doctrine of Jesus Christ and every dogma of His Church, but every holy sacrament, every pious practice, every rule and ordinance of the Church; every means of practising and advancing virtue and good works; every means of conferring and increasing the sanctifying grace of God, consequently sanctity and holiness of life, which is a pearl of infinite value, and adorns the soul with such transcendent beauty that the mind of man can never conceive its inestimable grandeur and love-

* Acts xx. 28. † St. Luke xii. 42. ‡ St. Matt. xiii. 11.

liness. Moreover, each of these heavenly gifts was purchased at the infinite price of the precious blood of Jesus, from which it derives all its beauty and virtue. The least of them is worth buying, even at the risk of losing all that a man holds dear in this life. Even a drop of holy water or a blessed medal is to the pious believer a "holy thing," a valuable pearl. "The sensual man, who perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God," despises them; they are "foolishness to him."* But the true Christian believes that "every creature is sanctified by prayer and the word of God," † and when sanctified it is a "holy thing" and not to be given to dogs —that is to say, to such as would have no more respect for it than a dog, if it were given to him.

Catholics not only respect and revere all those things which Protestants respect in common with them, but also many other things which Protestants reject are sacred to the faithful Catholic, and valued as *good pearls* of infinite price, were it for no other reason than that they are "sanctified by the word of God and the prayers" *of the Church.* Among all the heresies which have ever arisen since the foundation of Christianity, there is not one so poor in holy things as Protestantism. All others have rejected but one or another, but Protestantism made a clean sweep of all *good pearls.* The only thing it retained was a mutilated Bible in a defective translation, which every man can interpret for himself according to his notions or his prejudices; whereas the true meaning of Scripture, with all the treasures of grace necessary for our salvation and perfection, remain as priceless pearls in the hands of the Catholic Church.

* 1 Cor. ii. 14. † 1 Tim. iv. 5.

CHAPTER II.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE REPRESENTS ALSO THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS PRACTISED AND RECOMMENDED BY JESUS CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

"WHEN he had found one pearl of great price he went his way, and sold all he had, and bought it." If a man has to give *all* for any of t e *good pearls* which are bestowed by Jesus Christ, how much more readily should he renounce all and sell all he possesses to purchase one particular pearl of exceeding great value, far surpassing all the others in beauty and magnificence! Here Protestantism has to be silent; it has no one gift of greater value than the rest; it considers all alike, one way, one ornament, one treasure for all—*faith in the Redeemer.* The Apostle St. Paul exhorts Christians in these words: "Be zealous for better gifts. And I show unto you yet a more perfect way."* Protestantism has no such better gifts; it has not a more excellent way than the one which it points out to all its followers—*belief in the Lord Jesus.*

Suppose a Protestant young man of great wealth and piety, like the one mentioned in the Gospel,† were to go to his minister, no matter to what Protestant creed he belonged, and say to him: "Reverend sir, I feel within me a great attraction to the human life of our Blessed Lord, and I desire most ardently to imitate, as far as it is possible for me, His manner of life on earth—His poverty, His chastity, His obedience. I will do as He advised the young man to do—go and sell all that I have and give it to the poor, and live in the strictest poverty myself in dress,

* 1 Cor. xii. 31. † St. Matt. xix. 21.

lodging, and all else that I may need—yes, live on alms.* Moreover, as our Saviour never was married, and St. Paul says it is better † not to marry, I intend to renounce marriage altogether and be one of those of whom Christ said: 'They have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven.' ‡ I understand from this text that our Lord means a state of celibacy and virginity—a state of life which pleases me particularly, because it makes men so like the angels; I also read in Scripture that they who practise it 'follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.' § Such, then, is the excellence of virginity in my estimation that I resolve to practise it. Finally, as Jesus Christ practised obedience at His entrance into this world and all His lifetime, 'becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,' ‖ and as mankind fell from God by disobedience and have to return to Him by obedience, I wish to practise this virtue in all the actions of my life, to obey when I pray, when I work, even when I eat or drink or sleep—in a word, in all things that are not sin. Therefore I wish to submit myself to a lawful superior whose orders I can obey as if they came from the lips of Christ, who says, 'He that heareth you heareth Me,' ¶ and who also says that 'it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven'; ** that 'with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.' †† For this reason I will follow the counsel of Jesus, who said to the young man in the Gospel: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and

* St. Luke viii. 3. † 1 Cor. vii. 38. ‡ St. Matt. xix. 12. § Apoc. xiv. 4
‖ Phil. ii. 8. ¶ St. Luke x. 16. ** St. Matt. xix. 24. †† Ibid. xix. 26.

come, follow Me.'* This, reverend sir, is my determination, and I wish to have your advice and direction in such an important matter."

What would be the answer of the Protestant minister to this good youth? Would he say: "Yes, my young friend; you have read the Bible without note or comment on what you have read—'*This do and thou shalt live*'"?† Or would he not rather shake his head and say warmly: "You go too far; if you do this you will be a *Romanist;* all this is not necessary; you must not go to extremes; if Christ said so He did not mean it in that way," etc., etc.? Poor Protestant ministers! Whenever their opinion differs from the words of Jesus Christ they will not deny that Christ said so, but they pretend that He did not *mean* what He said; as if our Lord was like those self-styled ministers of the Gospel, who never mean what they say and never say what they mean!

But come, dear young man or woman, whoever you be, rich or poor, if you "take this word" and think *it is given to you:* "If thou wilt be perfect,"‡ and are "zealous for better gifts,"§ come to any faithful, zealous Catholic priest, and he will "show unto you yet a more excellent way"—this pearl of exceeding great price, which surpasses in brightness and glory all other pearls, and all other gifts obtained in less "excellent ways." There are thousands of both sexes in the Catholic Church who "take this word," and not only have sold all they possessed and have given it to the poor, but have also left‖ house, and brethren and sisters, father, mother, wife and children, and lands, and whatever was dear to them in this

* St. Matt. xix. 21. † St. Luke x. 28. ‡ St. Matt. xix. 11, 21.
§ 1 Cor. xii. 31. ‖ St. Matt. xix. 29.

life, to follow Jesus Christ as closely as possible in religious communities by the practice of poverty, chastity, and obedience; these are they who follow the more *excellent way*, after the example of the first Christians, who "had but one heart and one soul, neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but all things were common unto them." *

Poor Protestantism, which boasts of following the pure Gospel, has never yet succeeded in leading any of its followers in this more *perfect way!* If it sometimes makes an effort it always fails in the end; whereas the Catholic Church, in all ages and countries, among all the nations which she has converted to Christ, has found thousands of those chosen souls that, zealous for *better gifts*, have followed Jesus Christ in this yet more excellent way, that have formed the fairest portion of her flock on earth as well as the most brilliant gem in her heavenly diadem. Our Divine Lord has said: "All men do not take this word, but they to whom it is given.' † The Protestant Bible has: "All men *cannot* receive this saying, save they to whom it is given." If it is not given to those who *do not take* it, how much less to those who say they *cannot take it?* Here Protestantism is vanquished, and Catholicity retains possession of this "one pearl of great price," which is continually sought after by numbers of her devoted children, who willingly sell all they have to purchase it; for she "taketh the word," and to her *it is given.* She alone teaches the true Gospel of Jesus Christ in all its perfection.

* Acts iv. 32. † St. Matt. xix. 11.

SECTION VII.

THE PARABLE OF THE NET.

"Again the kingdom of heaven is like to a net cast into the sea, and gathering together all kind of fishes."—St. Matt. xiii. 47.

CHAPTER I.

THE NET IS A FIGURE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRUE CHURCH, OUT OF WHICH THERE IS NO SALVATION.

IT was not by mere chance or accident, but in the wise designs of His holy Providence, that our blessed Saviour chose His Apostles from among fishermen; that from the bark of Peter he quelled the storm and taught the multitude; or that St. Peter, at the bidding of His Divine Master, launched into the deep and procured the miraculous draught of fishes, so that "their net broke."* A man must indeed be devoid of understanding if he does not see how beautifully this miraculous draught of fishes typifies the great draught of souls which St. Peter particularly was to make when he became "a fisher of men." And as the miracles of our Lord, like all His other actions, contain lessons for our instruction and edification just as well as His parables—they

* St. Luke v. 6.

in the present case most beautifully and appropriately illustrate each other—and as both are intended to convey the same doctrine, we may, without doing violence to the sacred text, use the account of the miraculous draught of fishes to illustrate the parable of the *net*. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a net cast into the sea." The *sea* is, manifestly, this world we live in—"that great sea, which stretcheth wide its arms; there are creeping things without number, creatures little and great. . . . This sea-dragon which thou hast formed to play therein." * This world is a sea, whose troubled waves are constantly in motion, and whose calm, if there be any, is immediately disturbed by winds and tempests; where thousands of monsters are in pursuit of the fishes that inhabit its waters and for whom there is no security except they are caught in the net of Peter and conveyed in safety to the bark where Jesus presides. Hence, if the sea is the world, and the *great dragon*, the devil, is "the prince of this world," † we can well understand why St. Peter admonishes us to "be sober and watchful, because your adversary, the devil, goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." ‡

Now, as to the parable, the *net* represents the word of God, the eternal truth, revealed to man in the Old and New Testaments; and as the net which is used by fishermen is made of one and the same thread knitted into meshes, inseparable from each other, so the net of divine doctrine is made of one and the same eternal truth. Although it has a great many meshes, it is but one thread. If you cut one thread of a mesh you are in danger of disuniting the whole

* Ps. ciii. 25, 26. † St. John xii. 31., xiv. 30., xvi. 11. ‡ 1 St. Peter v. 8.

net when force is used against it; so also if you deny one point of the doctrine of Jesus Christ the force of logic may push you to deny the whole of it. It is the same with divine faith as with mathematics: if you admit one proposition you have to admit all or reject all. There is no such thing as half or quarter belief where faith is concerned. The same divine authority which you have for believing one dogma of faith you have for admitting all others; and these dogmas are so closely connected and interwoven with each other that if you deny one you have to deny all others that are based upon it. Martin Luther, the founder of Protestantism, acknowledged this truth when he wrote (A.D. 1544): "Therefore you are bound plain and flat either to believe all and everything whole and entire or to believe nothing. The Holy Ghost cannot be separated or divided so as to teach or believe one part to be true and the other false." * Thus spoke the great Reformer himself. Would to God he had acted according to his words!

The *net* is the doctrine of Jesus Christ; it is one, whole, and entire; one dogma perfectly corresponds to all the others; there is nothing unreasonable or contradictory in it. Like a very long train of reasoning, consequences become premises for other consequences, and nothing but want of logic and sound argument can break through this *net* designed to catch souls and "bring into captivity every created understanding unto the obedience of Christ." † As a specimen of what I advance I will lead the reader from one end of this net to the other; that is, through the Old and New Testament, as they are but

* Edit. Jen., fol. 180a. † 2 Cor. x. 5.

one in point of doctrine. I will lead him from one corner of the net, which is the beginning of the world, to the other, which is in the hands of St. Peter, who draws it to Christ.

That God created man is a fact which philosophy proves and revelation teaches. Starting from this principle, I reason thus: If God has created man He must have created him for a certain end; for God cannot act without a purpose, without an end, proposed to Himself in His action. This end must be either natural or supernatural; which of the two? I can only know by revelation; but in either case if God has created man for a certain end, He must also have provided the means necessary for man to reach that end. The means must correspond to the end: if the end is natural it is attained by natural means; if it is supernatural, by supernatural means. Now, we are taught by revelation that God has created man for a supernatural end—the beatific vision of Himself in heaven—therefore He must also have provided man with supernatural means wherewith to reach this end, as such an end cannot be reached by mere natural means. And if He has created all men for the same supernatural end, He has likewise placed within the reach of all men the supernatural means necessary to attain this end.

What these supernatural means are, and how man may have access to them, we know from revelation. They are facts of history. True, unadulterated history informs us that God sent His only-begotten Son on earth to teach *our ignorance* what we have to believe and do in order to reach this end, and to strengthen our will by His holy grace that we may be able to accomplish this task. "Without Me," says Christ,

"you can do nothing."* History also teaches us that Christ, the Son of God, chose twelve Apostles, whom He instructed in the mysteries of His holy religion, and to whom He gave "all power in heaven and in earth" to continue the work which He had commenced; consequently, all the means of salvation were placed in the hands of the Apostles, to be communicated through them to the rest of mankind.

But the Apostles did not remain long on earth after our Lord's ascension, nor was it intended they should; and yet the Gospel of Jesus Christ was to be preached to all nations "to the consummation of the world." † "Not for them only did He pray that they might be one, but for them also who through their word would believe in Him" ‡ in all future generations; therefore the successors of the Apostles must have received the same means, and power, and authority as the Apostles themselves. The Apostles taught and governed the faithful under the special guidance of the Holy Ghost—the "Spirit of truth," who was to *abide with them for ever*.§ So do their successors teach and govern by the direction of the same Holy Spirit. Christ has said, "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." ‖ And wherever in Holy Scripture God says to a person, *I am with thee*, it signifies a special help and assistance from God to that person; therefore the successors of the Apostles up to this day, and for all future time to the last day of the world, have taught and will teach and govern under the special guidance of the Spirit of truth and the perpetual assistance of Jesus Christ.

* St. John xv. 5. † St. Matt. xxviii. 20. ‡ St. John xvii. 20.
§ Ibid. xiv. 17. ‖ St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

Now, amongst the Apostles, Jesus Christ appointed St. Peter to the office of chief pastor of His flock, and commanded him not only to feed the *lambs*, but also the *sheep**—that is to say, the parents of the lambs; in other words, the clergy and laity. To him He said: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren." † This, then, is the power and duty of St. Peter's successor, the Pope or Bishop of Rome. But how can St. Peter, once truly converted, confirm his brethren in their faith, if his own faith fail and is fallible? Therefore the faith of St. Peter and his successor, the Pope, is infallible, and with his infallible word in faith and morals he is able to confirm his brethren, the bishops and other clergy, as well as the faithful entrusted to his care.

Behold here a series of truths closely connected with each other like the *net*. Take away one of them, and you have broken the net. You have also committed a fault in reasoning, a fault against logic, a fault so evident and clear that, on due examination, it will appear to you just as absurd as if you asserted that two and two make three, and not four.

The net was "cast into the sea" of this world to catch and save men who, blinded by error, were hastening to the bottomless deep; these are the fishes mentioned in the Gospel. When this net was cast into the sea all the fishes enclosed within it were caught; it is the business of the fishermen and the object of the net to catch fishes and to "bring into captivity every created understanding unto the obedience of Christ." ‡ Once they are within that net and the truths of religion sufficiently explained to

* St. John xxi. 15, 17. † St. Luke xxii. 32. ‡ 2 Cor. x. 5.

them, they cannot escape without breaking the net—that is, without acting against the highest reason and authority. The net is cast into the sea not for the purpose of destroying or tormenting the fishes that enter it, but to rescue and bring them to Jesus Christ, who is in the bark of Peter, ready to save and protect them from the monsters of the deep.

Behold in the miraculous draught of fishes a most beautiful representation of the true Church of Jesus Christ! During almost nineteen hundred years He is in the bark of Peter—the Roman Catholic Church—guiding and protecting her, ever faithful to His promise: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world";* and if sometimes He seemed to sleep whilst the tempest of human revolution swept away kingdoms and empires, and, flattered by its momentary triumph, breathed destruction even against the bark of Peter, Peter, or his successor in the Apostolic See of Rome, had only to cry out, "Lord! save us, we perish," † for we need at this moment Thy special assistance; and the Lord "commanded the wind and the waves, and there was a great calm." ‡ After every such tempest Peter, at the command of Christ, launches again into the deep and lets down his net for a draught, enclosing a multitude of new fishes. There is no better time for catching fish than after a tempest. So, in like manner, if you read the history of the Roman Catholic Church, you will see that after every outburst of persecution or heresy she acquired new possessions, made new conquests, and gained more souls to the kingdom of Christ.

* St. Matt. xxviii. 20. † Ibid. viii. 25. ‡ Ib. viii. 26.

CHAPTER II.

AS ALL THE FISHES WITHIN THE NET WERE NOT GOOD, SO IN THE SAME MANNER MANY OF THOSE WHO PROFESS THE CATHOLIC FAITH WILL BE REJECTED ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT FOR NOT LIVING ACCORDING TO THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH.

"The net cast into the sea gathered together of all kind of fishes: which, when it was filled, they drew out, and sitting by the shore, they chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth."—ST. MATT. xiii. 47, 48.

THE text just quoted settles the question, so much discussed among the sects, as to who belongs to the true Church. Evidently all those within the net, and not those who would not be caught under any consideration, but are satisfied to roam outside at liberty. As to those within the net, they are *all kinds*, great and small, thick and thin, good and bad fishes. It was always the capital error of every founder of a sect that he would have no bad fishes in the net—no bad men in the Church. Every heresiarch, no matter how bad or corrupt in his own morals, always pretended to be a good fish, even better than the others in the net, and when he broke through the net to *draw disciples after him* * he pointed out the bad fishes, and made others believe that all in the net were as bad as these, and even worse, and that they were bound in duty to separate from them at once, and not wait for that last terrible day, when the net shall be "drawn out, and the wicked separated from among the just." †

With them the Church of Jesus Christ was not an

* Acts xx. 30. † St. Matt. xiii. 49.

institution for the conversion of sinners and the perfection and sanctification of the faithful; they wanted a church of saints, and considered themselves the *elect of God*, whilst they condemned as reprobates those among the faithful who transgressed the law, thus anticipating the final sentence which the Great Judge shall pronounce when the net is drawn to shore. These men who broke away from the Church in their mistaken zeal were far more guilty than the bad fishes in the net whose conduct scandalized them. A Catholic who does not live up to the faith he professes, whether he belong to the clergy or laity, is always a bad fish; yet as long as he remains in the net and does not break through it altogether—in other words, as long as he remains in the Church and does not renounce his faith—he is tolerated and has a chance to be converted and become a good fish; whereas if he break through the net by renouncing his faith and rejecting the authority of the Church, to set up for himself or follow other leaders than Christ and the Apostles who with Peter draw the net to the heavenly shore, he casts off the dominion Christ has over him, and has as little chance to be chosen by Him and placed in the *vessels* of election as the fishes that broke the net and escaped into the deep when St. Peter was favored with the miraculous draught.

Nor will it avail to salvation to follow the net in small companies, and spend one's life in peeping through its meshes, as those do who "search the Scriptures, thinking in them to have eternal life," without any desire to find the truth or embrace it, though their guide, the holy Scripture, clearly points out to them the Church of the living God.

It is, then, necessary to be *in the net* which conveys to the bark of Peter, where Jesus Christ presides, teaching all nations. But, alas! prejudice and passion prevent the sects from seeing their danger outside the net; and fancying they follow the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ, they sink back into the deep of error as soon as they perceive that the pure, unadulterated text of Scripture would lead them to the Church presided over by St. Peter and his successor, the Pope. They look for reasons and excuses to remain outside rather than embrace the truth which their good sense clearly points out; they prefer to be devoured by the monstrous illusions which the prince of the deep has invented and set in vogue *to catch souls*, rather than be caught in the net of Peter and his successors and conveyed to Jesus Christ in the bark—the Holy Roman Catholic Church, to which He has said, "Behold, I am with you always until the consummation of the world."

In the meantime the work of drawing the net through the sea of this world goes on steadfastly. If the net break now and again it is not the good but the bad fish that break it; they are not willing to follow the draught, they disobey and separate themselves from the Church, and we can point out to them the exact spot where they slipped through the net. Let them read the Gospel of St. Matthew (xviii. 17): "And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican." If they heard the Church and obeyed it, as Christ commanded, they would always remain in the Church, within the net; but when they refuse to hear the Church, no matter what good fishes they fancy themselves to be, they break through the command of Christ which confines

them within the Church, and they are no better than the heathen and publican, who were never in the net, never converted to Christianity; they plunge into the deep of error, and we pity their much-boasted false liberty of thinking and judging for themselves.

When the net is broken by some rebellious child of the Catholic Church it is easily mended by the thread of apostolical tradition, which is the living "faith handed down to the saints," and engrafted on the hearts of the faithful, pastors and laity, much better and in a more lasting way than on parchment or marble; whilst the œcumenical councils, presided over and approved by the successors of St. Peter, can say with as much truth as the first general council of the Apostles, held at Jerusalem and presided over by St. Peter in person: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us," etc.* The same Holy Ghost, the same Spirit of truth, abides with them for ever.

The patience and charity which the Catholic Church exercises towards the bad fishes in her net are most remarkable. So long as the least hope of their amendment remains she tolerates them, even as the Good Shepherd Himself, who left the *ninety-nine sheep in the desert* to go after one that strayed from His gentle care. It is only when she has tried every means to win the erring one, and when his presence is scandalous beyond endurance and his obstinate perversity past recovery, that she consents to separate him from her communion, and casts him into the deep to join those who refused to be caught. What a contrast, if compared with the harshness and rigor of the sects, especially those of the Calvinistic school, that turn out of their church ministers and

*Acts xv. 28.

people, sometimes, for the most trivial reasons! St. Augustine says: "Every sinner is permitted to live either that he may be converted or that the just man may be exercised through him" in all virtues. If sinners were not tolerated in the Church of Jesus Christ there would be little chance to practise patience, forbearance, clemency, charity, forgiveness of injuries, zeal, love, etc. In fact, if "the just man falleth seven times,"* and if a "man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred,"† there would not be many left in the Church of Christ on earth, if every sinner was excluded. The Church on earth is the Church militant, not triumphant; and as long as the final victory is not gained over all the enemies of salvation, and the measure of the elect not completed, there will always be those who fight nobly and those who are cowards, who sometimes give up the combat for a time, are wounded, even deadly, but restored again to health and vigor by the grace of the holy sacraments and other means which the Church employs to re-establish in the grace of God the poor sinner who still remains in her communion—within the net.‡

Only when the *net* shall be filled, and the number

* Prov. xxiv. 16. † Eccles. ix. 1.

‡ Luther himself acknowledges that the moral corruption which in his time prevailed even in Rome itself and elsewhere was not sufficient cause for a separation from the Catholic Church. He writes thus in the year 1519 (tom. i., Jen., fol. 166b): "Ob es leyder zu Rom also steht, dasz wohl besser tüchte, so ist doch die und kein Ursach zu grosz oder werden mag, dasz man sich von derselben Kirchen reissen oder scheiden solle." "Der Einigkeit sollen wir in acht nehmen und bei leib nicht widerstreben Päbstlichen Gebotten." . . . "Dem Römischen Stuhl soll man in allen Dingen folgen." (Although unfortunately matters are not as they should be in Rome, yet there is not, nor can be, any cause so great as to justify a separation from that Church. . . . We ought to guard unity carefully, and by no means resist the papal commands. And again, fol. 167a: We ought to follow the Roman See in all things.)

of the elect preordained by God to enjoy eternal happiness shall be complete, then will it be drawn out: "And sitting by the shore they chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth." Our Saviour Himself explains this text: "So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall go out to separate the wicked from among the just."* Remark here that the commencement will be made with the good and bad fishes in the net—that is to say, those who have been not only good *men*, but also good, practical *Christians* in the true Church of Christ, shall be chosen into vessels of divine election, whilst the bad Christians, those members of the true Church who were unfaithful to their holy calling and committed sin like the heathen and publican, shall be *cast forth* as those who never entered the Church of the living God, but lived and died in the sea of sin and unbelief. "Their portion shall be with the unbelievers." † Yes, they "shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ‡

Were this parable only meant for those in the net, whether they be good or bad fishes, our explanation would not be condemned; but it also points out too clearly the unfortunate lot of those who refuse to be caught in the net—in other words, all those who refuse to believe "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth," § out of which there is no salvation. This apparently severe doctrine of the Catholic Church is loudly censured by those whose disadvantage is concerned. But let them remember that it is not the Church but her Divine Founder who has said: "He that believeth not shall be con-

* St. Matt. xiii. 49. † St. Luke xii. 46. ‡ St. Matt. xiii. 50. § Tim. iii. 15.

demned." * She does not invent or shape her dogmas according to human fancy, but proposes them as she received them from Jesus Christ Himself, as times and circumstances may require. She cannot betray the trust confided to her, nor listen to the advice of those who speak as the revolting Jews of old: "Who say to the seers: See not: and to them that behold: Behold not for us those things. . . . Speak unto us pleasant things, see errors for us." † For "thus saith the Lord God: Woe to them that sew cushions under every elbow, and make pillows for the heads of persons of every age, to catch souls." ‡ Why lull to sleep troubled consciences on cushions and pillows of new-fangled systems and theories that are founded on error, and deliver those who rest on them to eternal death? The Lord God has said: "Behold I declare against your cushions, wherewith you catch flying souls, . . . and I will tear your pillows." §

If mankind could be saved outside of the Church just as well as in it, why was the Church of Jesus Christ established? If there are good fishes outside of the net that are to be chosen into the vessels of divine election as well as those that have been good within it, for what purpose was the net cast into the sea? And if heaven can be attained on easier terms outside of the Church than within it, then the work of Jesus Christ and of His Apostles was altogether unnecessary, and the promises of Him whose word "shall not pass away" ‖ false and worthless. From this it is evident that they who condemn this doctrine of the Church condemn the doctrine of Christ;

* St. Mark vi. 16. † Is. xxx. 10. ‡ Ezech. xiii. 18.
§ Ibid. 20, 21. ‖ St. Matt. xxiv. 35.

and to do this is to deny alike His holiness, His veracity, and His divinity. Hence, is it not an infinitely great act of charity to arouse souls that are lulled asleep on such cushions and pillows, by warning them in time of the danger to which they are exposed if they remain voluntarily outside the pale of salvation ?

And now what can Protestantism apply in this parable to itself, except the part we have assigned it of bad fishes that broke through the net and went into the deep to take part *with the unbelievers?* If it can be called *a net*—being only a negation—it is as many nets as there are sects in it ; and even that would be saying too much for its unity, every man being free to form his own creed and fasten it on others, if he chooses. They seem rather a multitude of fishermen, each one fishing with his own hook and line ; for every sect has its own peculiar doctrine by which it distinguishes itself from the others, and tries to catch souls on its own hook.

It is true that the net, cast into the sea and drawn by strong hands, works both ways : as it includes all sorts of fishes caught within, so it excludes the multitude that refuse to be caught, as also those who were in for some time, but broke through and follow the net in small companies, believing, forsooth, that they are safe within it, when, in fact, they are out of it in the deep. Such as fall away in this manner from the Church of Jesus Christ anticipate, as it were, by their own free choice that last and final separation which will take place on the awful day of general judgment. For "so shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire : where there shall be

weeping and gnashing of teeth." * And not only shall all those be rejected who never entered the net, or who, being once in, broke through to enjoy the fatal liberty of the deep; but also those bad fishes found in the net shall be cast out—that is to say, all those who, though members of the true Church of Jesus Christ and professing the Catholic faith, neglected to practise what it enjoined. Thus the word of the Lord is verified: "Many are called but few are chosen." †

* St. Matt. xiii. 49, 50. † Ibid. xx. 16.

SECTION VIII.

THE PARABLE OF THE SCRIBE.

Our Divine Saviour concludes the series of parables in St. Matt. xiii. with the question: "Have you understood all these things? They say to Him: Yes. He said unto them: Therefore every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like to a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old."

CHAPTER I.

OUTSIDE THE CATHOLIC CHURCH THERE CAN BE NO PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

THERE can be no doubt that Jesus Christ was most anxious that His disciples should not only know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but also understand their proper meaning; although in themselves, being of a supernatural order, they are mysteries surpassing the comprehension of every human understanding. In fact, He left nothing undone to secure to them the full possession of His divine revelation in its true sense and meaning. He instructed them in parables and without parables; if any of these was obscure to them, or in any way liable to be misapplied or misunderstood, He Himself explained it to

them. And before He went to the Father He promised, and afterwards sent, the Holy Ghost, "the Spirit of truth, that He should abide with them for ever, to teach them all truth and bring to their minds all things whatsoever He hath commanded them."* Finally, when He gave them the command to "go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature," He promised: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."†

Now, the words, "I am with you," wherever they are applied by God to man in holy Scripture, signify the special help and assistance of Almighty God to that individual whom He has chosen to accomplish an important work. But to what would all these promises amount, if, after giving His divine word to mankind, Jesus Christ left every man free to form his own opinion about its real meaning and to put his own construction on it, according as his talents or ignorance, his science or prejudice, his piety or passion might prompt him? Or in what way would the human race be better off after the coming of Christ than before it? Before the coming of Christ human reason, having lost the primitive revelation given to mankind, left to its own resources, could not establish with certitude all the truths relating to man's destiny here or hereafter. With the exception of the very primary principles of morality, everything was involved in doubt. Its most enlightened philosophers presented their tenets merely as opinions, in a doubtful manner; not one of them dared to say, "Amen, amen, I say to you." Now, if, after the word of God was revealed to man, every one was permitted to have his own opinion about it, mankind would be in

* St. John xiv. 26. † St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

no better position than before ; for opinion does not exclude doubt, the only difference being that before Christ men doubted about truths belonging to the natural, moral order ; after Christ they would be doomed to doubt about supernatural, revealed truths, as well as about many belonging to the natural order.

To secure the benefits of the Gospel in its true meaning, with all the means of grace, for future generations, our Lord established in His Church a body of teachers, priests of the new testament and "dispensers of the mysteries of God." As they were to continue the work of the salvation of souls which He had commenced, so He furnished them with the same powers which He received from His heavenly Father for that purpose ; He also invested them with His own authority : "He that heareth you heareth Me."* "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations," † etc. So well were they to be guided in all truth by the *Spirit of truth*, the Holy Ghost abiding with them for ever, and by His own continual presence, that His Gospel would be preached in all its purity till the end of time, and not "one iota," not "one tittle," ‡ omitted or forgotten. So that men have only to hear and obey the teachers and pastors of that Church governed by the Pope, the Vicar of Jesus Christ and successor of St. Peter (for whom Christ prayed especially, "that his faith fail not," and who is thus enabled to "confirm his brethren" in the faith), in order to obtain, even in this nineteenth century, as pure a knowledge of the teachings of Jesus Christ and as certain means of salvation as if they lived in the days of His sojourn on earth and

* St. Luke x. 16. † St. Matt. xxiii. 18. ‡ Ibid. xxiv. 14, v. 18.

had access to His divine person; and if questioned by our Blessed Lord, "Have you understood all these things?" they could answer, "Yes," with as much truth and certainty as the Apostles.*

"He said unto them: Therefore every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven," etc. The law of Moses being the law of Church and state among the Jews, many of them made the study of this law their profession. Hence we read in the Gospel, "A certain lawyer stood up," "and one of them, a doctor of the law, asked Him, tempting Him." † Numbers of these professors were employed in various offices about the temple, as clerks, etc., and were called *scribes*. The majority of these, through fear of losing their posts of emolument by being superseded, like the Jewish priesthood, if Christ gained the ascendency, became His sworn enemies and opposed Him in every possible way; whereas the love of truth should have induced them to become His followers and defenders. Hence the distinction which our Lord makes: not "every scribe" whatsoever, but "every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like to a man," etc. For there are scribes, and lawyers, and doctors of the law who indeed bear titles of high degree in the science of law and divinity, but are as ignorant of the laws of God and the kingdom of heaven, His holy Church, as the heathens who never knew Christ. This is not only true of the graduates of the ancient law and divinity, but likewise of many a scribe, lawyer, and doctor of divinity under the new law who has received his titles of honor, not "in the kingdom of heaven" (the true Church), but outside of it. Therefore it is no cal-

* See note to page 74. † St. Luke x. 25; St. Matt. xxii. 35.

umny to say that every Catholic divine who has had occasion to converse with sectarian ministers, or to instruct them previous to their reception into the Catholic Church, is constrained to testify that, no matter how well learned they are in every branch of human science, they are often fearfully ignorant of the science of sciences—the true religion of Jesus Christ. How many a reverend editor would change the tone of his violent articles against Romanism, *if he was properly instructed* IN *the kingdom of heaven!* And many a reverend D.D. would never appear as the author of a book against popery, had he not drawn his information from poisonous fountains which the father of lies has opened outside the true fold of Christ for the destruction of souls. The most illiterate Catholic, "instructed in the kingdom of heaven," will pity their ignorance and say with the Saviour: "They are blind and leaders of the blind." * And now, if "every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like to a man that is a householder," then every scribe that is not instructed in the kingdom of heaven must be a house destroyer. For the household of God is His holy Church on earth, and Christ has said: "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth." † Now, if Christ is with His Church "all days, even to the consummation of the world," how can he be with Christ who is out of the Church? Or how can he, even for a moment, believe that he gathereth with Christ when he protests against the Church established by Christ, and seeks to "draw disciples after him" ‡ away from the true Church, and, therefore, away from Christ?

* St. Matt. xv. 14. † St. Luke xi. 23. ‡ Acts xx. 30.

Truly is every man "instructed in the kingdom of heaven" like a householder—he is conservative; the more he knows and learns about the Catholic Church, the more he loves and cherishes it, the more he is pleased and charmed with all its details, and the greater is his eagerness to employ his talents and learning in upholding and defending whatever he knows belongs to the household of God; whereas he who is *not* "instructed in the kingdom of heaven" has no divine faith, but only human opinions liable to vary every day, and is, in the true sense of the word, that "sensual man" spoken of by St. Paul.* Judging all things by the testimony of his senses, he "perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God: for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand: because it is spiritually examined." † No wonder that he rejects what his mind considers foolishness, and opposes to the conservatism of the Catholics a species of radicalism which ends in rejecting every supernatural truth of religion and dragging it down to the level of a philosophical opinion, like the teaching of a Confucius, a Plato, a Socrates, a Hegel, or a Strauss. Look at the workings of Protestantism, not only in Germany, where it originated, but in this country, where it has full liberty to exert itself. The more that learning and science flourish, the more of its votaries return to the bosom of the Catholic Church, the household of God, or pass to the ranks of infidels or unbelievers who discard all religion. Thus, when they are educated and intelligent, in spite of their prejudices, they are forced to acknowledge

* 1 Cor. ii. 14. † Ibid.

that, in order to be consistent, they must believe all or reject all—be Catholics or infidels.

CHAPTER II.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH PUTS NO BARRIER TO THE HUMAN INTELLECT, AND WE CAN ACQUIRE THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR HOLY FAITH WITHOUT THE AID OF HUMAN LEARNING.

"THE scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like to a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old." It is a favorite theme of sectarian preachers, especially when they take charge of a new congregation, to prove their orthodoxy by describing Roman Catholics as priest-ridden people, who are kept in darkness and ignorance, without liberty to have their own thoughts or opinions. Now, as God requires from man an implicit faith in all and everything He has revealed for the salvation of the human race, and established His Church to be the guardian and teacher of these truths, so this Church, which cannot be unfaithful to her trust, requires a firm and sincere belief in every one of her doctrines. Nor can an intelligent mind discover anything unreasonable in this; for these doctrines are not of her own fabrication, but the sacred deposit of "faith handed down to the saints." She is the organ of the Holy Spirit, and therefore cannot vary; *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* For this she is charged by her adversaries with placing a bar before the human intellect, hemming in, as it were, the progress of

the human mind (!), in spite of the works, amounting to thousands of volumes, with which her divines (the *scribes instructed in the kingdom of heaven*) in every century enrich her libraries. Who will not say that such an accusation is most unjust, and that nothing but malice and the greatest ignorance is capable of such an assertion?

The more excellent is the teacher the greater is my confidence in his abilities, and the more reason I have to expect he will teach me what other teachers cannot. A distinguished professor of a university is supposed to know more than an ordinary country schoolmaster. Hence, if God Himself sends His only-begotten Son into the world to teach mankind the most necessary science—the science of salvation—I have reason to believe that He will teach me what no one but a God could teach. And although He teaches me divine things—truths of the highest order, which are perfect mysteries to me, and which the infinite intellect of God alone can understand—still I am infinitely indebted to Him for this knowledge; the more so if I am convinced that my own feeble intellect had no other possible way to obtain this knowledge. And if this science which the Son of God teaches me is the science of salvation, if my happiness in time and eternity depends on my knowing and submitting to these truths, most humbly do I accept the word and will of my God, although the whole is a mystery to me, shown, as it were, "through a glass and in a dark manner."* Every such revealed truth is for me a banknote payable in eternity. If I firmly believe, and act according to my belief,

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

I am sure to win the prize of a blessed eternity. I may be ignorant of banking and money exchange, but it is sufficient for me to know that this bill is worth five dollars, that one ten, and this other a hundred. You would certainly laugh at the folly of a man who would refuse to accept a thousand-dollar bill for the simple reason that he did not understand how that piece of paper was equal to a thousand dollars in gold. All the works of a clock or a machine are based on mathematics; nevertheless how many excellent clock-makers and machinists are there in our country who never studied mathematics, and would consider it a loss of time if they were obliged to study them now before continuing their trade!

Behold! such is the condition of those so-called ignorant and benighted Catholics who believe what they cannot understand, and are, in consequence, held up as objects of pity and commiseration before "enlightened" congregations. These Catholics, even if not able to read or write, know what to believe and do in order to save their souls. They believe the priest, the priest teaches them what the Church teaches, and the Church teaches what Jesus Christ and His holy Apostles taught. Thus *keeping* the old *faith*, and, by the aid of God's grace, adding new merits every day to the treasure already acquired, they are, even if destitute of secular learning, well versed in heavenly science, and far more like "a man who is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old," than the learned sectarian divine who, with the title of Doctor of Divinity to his name, has nothing to rely upon for the proper meaning of the word of God

but his own or other men's opinion; who searcheth the Scriptures, thinking thereby to find life, and "is tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine"*; "ever learning and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth";† erring and driving into error. Every day he bringeth forth from his treasure something new or startling, but rejects the old, showing thereby that he is not the scribe represented by our Lord in the parable—"a scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven." If, then, the Catholic Church teaches the rude and ignorant what they have to believe and do in order to be saved, how does she hinder their intellectual progress? Would they be more intelligent if not instructed in these truths? But, you say, the same obligation of belief and submission to the Church is also placed as a bar before the minds of the educated classes; it prevents them from seeing any farther than the Church permits them to see.

I answer: The obligation to believe what God says is a natural duty, it is a natural law, dictated by the common sense of reason which the Creator has deposited in every human soul. The Church only enforces this law, which existed before she herself existed, because from all eternity it was a truth that the creature is bound to believe the word of the Creator. If the Church allows no denial, no doubt, no alteration or misconstruction of any of her dogmas, it is because the veracity of the Son of God, who has revealed these truths, is attacked when any of His doctrines is denied or doubted. These dogmas are so many fixed stars in the firmament of holy Church. They cannot be reached by the perversity and frivol-

* Eph. iv. 14. † 2 Tim. iii. 7.

ity of man. He may close his eyes against them and deny their existence; he may misrepresent them and look at them through glasses stained the color of every prejudice; but he cannot do away with them altogether, nor change in any way their natural brightness and brilliancy. Like the stars that deck the vault of heaven, they are to *give* light, not to *receive* light from human reason. They are the word of God, and what God says is truth, that cannot be made untruth. The mind that receives truth is enlightened thereby; the mind that denies or misrepresents it is darkened and corrupted.

Besides, every dogma of faith is to the Catholic cultivated mind not only a new increase of knowledge, but also an incontrovertible principle from which it is able to draw conclusions and derive other truths. They present an endless field for investigation, so that the beloved Apostle St. John could write at the end of his Gospel, without fear of exaggeration: "But there are also many other things which Jesus did: which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." *

The Catholic Church, by enforcing firm belief in her dogmas—which are not her inventions, but were given by Jesus Christ—places them as a bar before the human mind to prevent it from going astray and to attach it to the truth; but it does not prevent the mind from exercising its functions when it has secured the treasure of divine truth, and a "scribe thus instructed in the kingdom of heaven is truly like a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old." He may

* St. John xxi. 25.

bring forth new illustrations, new arguments and proofs; he may show new applications of the same truths, according to times and circumstances; he may show new links which connect the mysteries of religion with each other or with the natural sciences—as there can be no discord between the true faith and true science; God, being the author of both, cannot contradict Himself and teach something by revelation as true which He teaches by the true light of reason as false. In all these cases the householder "brings forth from his treasure new things and old." They are *new* inasmuch as they are the result of new investigations; and *old* because they are contained in the old articles of faith and doctrine as legitimate deductions from their old principles.

And now, if a single individual, a scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven, be such a householder, how much more the holy Church of Jesus Christ, headed by the successor of St. Peter! Long before our Saviour had actually given to St. Peter the supreme charge of His Church He asked him: "Who, thinkest thou, is that faithful and wise steward whom the Lord hath set over His family, to give them their measure of wheat in due season?" * Whether St. Peter surmised at that time that he himself was to be raised to that office, as the question addressed to him in preference to the other Apostles insinuated, we will not discuss at present. So much, however, was certain: that one was to be set over the whole household of the Lord by the Lord Himself. In the present parable he is called "a man that is a householder"; again he is called "the faithful and

* St. Luke xii. 42.

wise steward whom the Lord hath set over His family." In both cases the individual thus placed above all others has a treasure to dispose of according to the needs of times and circumstances. In the parable he is described as one "instructed in the kingdom of heaven"; therefore he possesses full knowledge of the teaching and government of the true Church of God. In the text above quoted he is a "faithful and wise steward"—*faithful* to his trust, *wise* in his government and dispensation of the goods entrusted to his care. All this perfectly agrees with what the Lord had said to St. Peter: "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and thou once converted confirm thy brethren." "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep" (or, in the literal translation of the original Greek text: "Be a shepherd of My lambs, be a shepherd of My sheep"). Thus we see that Christ conferred on St. Peter and his successors, 1st, the prerogative of unerring faith, comprising all the doctrines of Jesus Christ without alteration ("thy faith fail not"); 2d, the prerogative of the fulness of power in the dispensation of the means of grace ("their measure of wheat")—wheat is nourishment for the body; the nourishment of the soul is divine grace ("life everlasting"); 3d, the prerogative of supreme power of government over clergy and laity ("feed My lambs, feed My sheep"). These prerogatives were to be exercised by St. Peter and his successors, not all at once and everywhere indiscriminately, but according to times and circumstances, as the good of the Church and the wants of the faithful required ("to give them their measure of wheat in due season"). But when or wherever they exercised them they acted the part of the "householder bring-

ing forth out of his treasure new things and old." They are new because newly enacted, declared, defined; they are old because they contain no new revelation or any assumption of power never granted by Christ, but simply old truths under new forms, the old power exercised under new circumstances, etc.

The Church of Christ, after existing almost nineteen hundred years, had as good a right to meet in council in the Vatican at Rome, under the presidency of Pius IX., the late successor of St. Peter, as it had in the first century of its existence, when St. Peter presided in person, at the Council of Jerusalem. Now, as then, it has a right to decide which of the prevailing opinions is in conformity with the teaching of Jesus Christ and belongs to the sacred deposit of faith "handed down to the saints," * and which is against it; and it can say with as much truth as the Apostles: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." † It is true the Holy Ghost makes no new revelation to the Church, nor does He teach her anything which Jesus Christ has not taught her before; on the contrary, our Saviour says: "He shall glorify Me: because He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it to you." ‡ Hence the dogmatic definitions of the popes and general councils of the Church are not new revelations, but a new definition, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, that such a doctrine belongs to the sacred deposit of faith preached by Jesus Christ, and consequently is received and approved of by the Church, or that another is opposed to it, and therefore is rejected and condemned. That same doctrine belonged to

* Jude i. 3. † Acts xv. 28. ‡ St. John xvi. 14.

the Church or was opposed to it from the first day when the law of Christ was promulgated. He Himself revealed the articles of faith, but left to His Church, presided over by St. Peter and his successors, "whose faith fails not," to decide what was in accordance with His teaching when, in the course of time, errors were started that threatened to subvert it. Thus the Church, as a good "householder, bringeth forth out of her treasures new things and old."

And here I cannot pass over in silence the extreme bad faith of the first Reformers who originated Protestantism, and those who copied after them. In order to justify their revolt against the authority of the spouse of Jesus Christ, the holy Catholic Church, they were bound to prove that the Church was wrong; and had they succeeded in doing so, which they could not, even that would have been no guarantee that they themselves were right. Many of those who joined in their rebellion against the Church left them also and convicted them of error afterwards. Still they persist in maintaining that the Catholic Church, although established by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, fell into error, and from a mistress of truth became a mistress of error and abominations. Appealing to the testimony of holy Scripture as the only rule of faith, they allow history to speak only when they see a chance of distorting its facts into an argument against Catholics; but if Catholics defend their faith from testimonies of unadulterated history, and prove that whatever they believe in this nineteenth century is the faith of the first Christians, taught by the Apostles, then it is the Bible—the Bible alone, without note or comment—that has to decide the matter, and the

testimony of history is accounted for nothing. Moreover, wherever there is a text in the Bible that has reference to matters controverted between Catholics and Protestants, and that favors Catholicity in any way, they would not dare to deny that Christ or His Apostles *said* or *did* so, but they insist He did not *mean* it, but meant something else; or they pass it over altogether and take no notice of it, as if it were no concern of theirs. For example, Christ said to St. Peter: "Thou art Peter (a rock), and upon this rock I will build My Church." They say He did not mean Peter, but something else—his confession of faith. Christ says: "To thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven." They say He did not mean Peter, but something else—the whole Church. Christ says: "This is My Body, this is My Blood." They say He did not mean that, but something else—bread and wine. All the powers granted by Jesus Christ, in an unlimited degree, to St. Peter and the Apostles, no matter what they concern, they confine to the power of preaching and baptizing. The keys of the kingdom of heaven granted to Peter is the power of preaching the Gospel; the power of binding and loosing is the power of preaching; the power to forgive or retain sin is the power of preaching; the power of anointing the sick with oil in the name of the Lord is the power of preaching; the power of ruling the Church of God is the power of preaching; the power to feed the lambs and the sheep is the same power of preaching.

If Catholics appeal to history, and prove from the testimony of the earliest writers of the Church that the first Christians believed in other powers granted

by Christ besides that of preaching the Gospel, see in what manner they are met on historical ground. If a Father of the Church mentions the holy water in use among the first Christians they say it was he himself who *invented* it. If the Bishop of Rome decided matters of dispute between other bishops they will have it that he usurped power over them. If he convoked general councils, presided over them by his legates, reserved to himself the ultimate approbation, he usurped powers and extended his ambition. If one speaks of the seven sacraments in the Church they will have it that the pope has invented five of them, as the Reformers preach only two. If the council orders the faithful to confess their sins to the priest *at least once a year*, the pope presiding over that council is declared the author of auricular confession, etc. If a council define a dogma as belonging to the faith, it is charged with having originated it and with having added to the doctrine of Christ. If popes or bishops exercise their jurisdiction and pass laws obligatory on all the faithful, crowned heads not excepted if they are Catholics, then the Church usurps power over the state and tries to tyrannize over nations, etc.* All the scandals that have

* It is remarkable how faithfully Luther acknowledged the authority of the chief householder of the Church of God, the successor of St. Peter, before he was condemned by the Holy See, and what he thought of those who opposed that authority. In his "protestation" at the commencement of his works (tom. i., Jen., fol. 12a) he writes as follows: "Weil dieses ein Theologische Disputation ist, auf dasz ich etlicher Hertzen zu Frieden stelle, die sich vielleicht am blossen Text der Schriften von Ablasz geärgert haben, will ich von neuem wiederholen die Protestation, welche in hohen Schulen der Brauch ist. So protestire oder bezeuge ich, dasz ich gar nichts sagen oder halten will, es seye den aus, oder in der heiligen Schrifft erstlich, darnach in den heiligen Vättern der Kirchen gegründet; von dem Römischen Stuhl angenommen und bishero gehalten, und was in Päbstlichen Rechten und Decretalen ist, und noch mit der Zeit seyen kan, etc., etc. Durch

taken place or have been invented by personal enemies of popes, bishops, and priests, are carefully gathered and preserved as historical facts, while their good and holy actions are attributed to hypocrisy, their charitable deeds maligned or forgotten. Such are the histories with which they supply Protestants and endeavor to catch unwary Catholics. Truly they

diese meine Protestation, hoffe ich, ist klar genug angezeigt, dasz ich zwar wohl irren kan, doch kein Ketzer will erfunden werden." (As this is a theological dispute, in order to set at peace the minds of some persons who may have been scandalized by the mere text of my writings concerning the indulgences, I will again renew the protestation which is in use in the high schools. Thus I protest or testify that I will not say or hold anything except it be founded first on *Holy Writ*, secondly on the Fathers of the Church, and that it be accepted and held thus far by the holy Roman See, and that it be contained in the papal laws and decrees, or which may in the course of time be decreed, etc., etc. I hope this my protestation is clear enough to show that I can err but do not want to be found a heretic.)

In another "protestation," which he prefixed to an answer on two articles held up to him by Cardinal Cajetan (fol. 114a) in the year 1518, he says: "Nichtsdestoweniger aber, weil ich ein Mensch bin, und irren kan, so hab ich mich untergeben, und untergib mich hiermit dem Erkenntnus und ordentlichen Auspruch der heiligen Kirchen." (But, nevertheless, as I am a man and can err, I have submitted myself and do submit to the judgment and regular decision of the holy Church.)

In his address to Cardinal Cajetan (fol. 121b) he speaks as follows: "Dieser Rath aber ist allein noch übrig, dasz ich durch eine bessere Ursach überwunden werde; welche ist (so ichs anderst würdig wäre) die Stimme der Braut (der Christlichen Kirchen) darüber hören möchte; den es ist gewisz, dasz selbige des Bräutigams Christi Stimme hört. Bitte derohalben in aller Demuth und Unterthänigkeit Euer Hochwürdige Vätterliche Liebe wollen diesen ungewissen Handel an unseren allerheiligsten Herrn Leonem X. gelangen lassen, auff dasz derselbe von der Kirchen erkandt, und entschlossen, entweder mit gutem Gewissen zu widerrufen, oder zu glauben mit Ernst befohlen werde. Den ich begehre anderst nichts, denn dasz ich der Kirchen Urtheil hören, ihm gehorchen, und folgen möge." (But this counsel alone remains: that I be overcome by a better cause—that is, that I hear the voice of the Bride (the Christian Church) on that subject, for it is certain that she hears the voice of the Bridegroom, Christ. I beg, therefore, in all humility and submission, that your reverend paternal charity may let this *uncertain* cause pass before our most holy lord Leo X., in order that it may be judged and decreed whether to retract *bonâ fide* or to believe. For I demand nothing more than to hear and know the sentence of the Church, that I may obey and follow it.)

are scribes not "instructed in the kingdom of heaven," but in the kingdom of the father of lies, who, like their ancestors in the time of Christ, brought forth out of their treasures new things only, not to preserve and strengthen the household of God, but to break it down and destroy it. Alas! like the scribes of old, they know but one commandment:

To the same Pope, Leo X., Luther wrote as follows (fol. 144a): "Nu allerheiligster Vatter ich bezeuge für Gott, und allen seinen Creaturen, dasz ich nie Willens gewest, noch heutigen Tages bin, dasz ich mir mit Ernst hätte fürgesetzt, der Römischen Kirchen und Euer Heiligkeit Gewalt einerley Weisz anzugreifen. Ya ich bekenne frey, dasz dieser Kirchen Gewalt über alles seye, und ihr nichts weder im Himmel, noch auff Erden könne fürgezogen werden, den allein Jesus Christus der Herr über alles. Derowegen wollen Euer Heiligkeit bösen falschen Lastermäulern nicht glauben geben, die vom Luther andersz sagen, oder ihm auflegen." (Now, most Holy Father, I testify before God and all His creatures that I never did, nor am I willing this day to, attack the authority of the Roman Church or that of your Holiness in any way whatsoever. Yes, I confess freely that this Church has power over all, and that nothing in heaven or on earth can be preferred to it except Jesus Christ alone, who is Lord of all. Therefore I pray your Holiness not to give credit to bad, false, and slanderous mouths who may speak otherwise of Luther or charge him differently.)

Another letter which Luther addressed to the same Pope Leo, ends with the following (fol. 58): "Derohalben heiligster Vatter falle ich für Euer Heiligkeit zu Füszen, und ergib sambt allem, was ich bin und habe. Euer Heiligkeit handeln mit mir ihres Gefallens. Bei Euer Heiligkeit steht es, meiner Sach ab, oder zuzufallen, mir Recht, oder Unrecht zu geben, mir das Leben zu shenken, oder zu nehmen. Es gerathe nu, wie es wolle, so will ich nicht anderst wissen, den dasz Euer Heiligkeit Stimme Christi Stimme seye, der durch sie handle und rede." (Therefore, most Holy Father, prostrate at the feet of your Holiness, I surrender myself and all that I am and have, that your Holiness may deal with me according to your good pleasure. It rests with your Holiness to approve or condemn my cause, to pronounce me right or wrong, to give me life or take it. Let what will happen to me, I want to know nothing but the voice of your Holiness, which is the voice of Christ, who acts and speaks through you.)

Was Luther sincere when he wrote such protestations of obedience and attachment to the Holy See? If he was sincere he ceased to be so after his writings were condemned by the Pope; for he called him the man of sin, the Antichrist, and a hundred other disgraceful names, which he would not dare to do before. But if he was not sincere even when he wrote these protestations, then he played the hypocrite in a most contemptible manner; and such a hypocrite founded Protestantism!

"Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day," and this they enforce with greater rigor than even the ancient Scribes and Pharisees; but they do not know that one which says: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

SECTION IX.

THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN.

THE parables which we have thus far examined principally exhibit to us the exterior of the true Church ; but as it is open to all nations, we may enter with confidence and examine its interior construction, taking as our guide-book the beautiful portrait drawn by the Divine Architect Himself.

Now, the material church edifice is a sensible representation of the spiritual edifice of every religion ; people build churches according to the tenets of their creed. For example, a Jewish synagogue is constructed differently from a mosque ; a mosque differs from a Catholic church ; in like manner, a Protestant church differs from a Catholic church ; and so it is with all denominations—each has a style peculiar to itself. Treating here only of Protestantism, I will show in the present parable that the idea of a place of worship, such as is at present constructed for Protestant sects, did not even enter the mind of our Saviour when He spoke of people praying in a place of public worship.

"Two men went up to the temple to pray : the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican." * The temple here alluded to by our blessed Saviour was

* St. Luke xviii. 10.

evidently the temple of Solomon at Jerusalem, which was a type of the future Church of Jesus Christ, as also of its many church edifices wherein the "clean oblation was to be offered from the rising of the sun to its going down."* To understand the true nature and destiny of these edifices we must go back to the time when the Lord God established the true mode of divine worship among His chosen people, the Israelites.

When Moses had received the Ten Commandments in the desert, and had the ark of the covenant made of incorruptible wood and fashioned according to the commands of the Almighty Himself, who gave the most minute instructions regarding its form and construction, and desired that the most beautiful things in nature and art should be employed to embellish this token of His abiding presence; when all was accomplished that He had commanded, and they had deposited therein the tables of the law, a vase full of the miraculous manna which sustained them in their journey, and the rod of Aaron blooming in everlasting verdure, then the sacred tent enclosed this hallowed sanctuary, and we are told that the majesty of the Lord God of Israel visibly descended on this tabernacle of the covenant in the sight of all the children of Israel, appearing as a dark cloud during the day, but assuming a bright, lurid aspect in the darkness of night. The Jews were amazed, and their joy knew no bounds, when they saw among them this sensible sign of God's presence; and when, in after-years, Solomon built the magnificent temple of Jerusalem, which was one of the seven wonders of the world, and dedicated it with unheard-of solemnity,

* Malachi i. 11.

placing the sacred tabernacle with the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies, there also the majesty of the Lord descended and filled the sanctuary; yes, "the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, and said to him: I have sanctified this house, which thou hast built, to put My name there for ever; and My eyes and My heart shall be there always." * This assurance of the abiding and special presence of God rendered the temple most venerable and attractive to the Jews, who were the chosen people of God, and consequently their temple was, at that time, the true Church of God; and so great was the respect which God demanded for the Holy of Holies that the high-priest alone was permitted to enter there, and this but once a year, after long purifications.

Hence, when the Pharisee and Publican entered the temple to pray both were attracted to a particular spot, a special apartment where their faith assured them God had fixed His tabernacle with men; both, however, did not occupy the same position: "The Publican standing afar off would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven." From this we must naturally suppose that the Pharisee, trusting in himself as just and despising others, must have stood *near;* and this is quite in accordance with the character of repentance and proud presumption attributed to them by the Saviour. Where, then, shall we place the Pharisee, that he be *near;* and where that poor Publican, that it can be said he is *afar off?* Near to what, and afar from whom?

As the scene is placed in Solomon's temple at Jerusalem, there is no difficulty in answering these

* 3 Kings viii. 10, ix. 3.

questions. The Pharisee rushed up as near as he was allowed to approach the Holy of Holies, where he believed God had fixed His habitation with men; whereas the poor Publican remained at the entrance, or farthest distance from the sanctuary, yet within the precincts of the temple. Of course here is meant the material distance, because, in the spiritual sense, the humble Publican, though *standing afar off*, was nearer to God than the proud Pharisee offering his prayer or eulogy of self-praise leaning over the railings of the sanctuary. Therefore there was a material spot in Solomon's temple where the true believers acknowledged a real and special Presence of God, not common to any other part of the building nor outside of it. God Himself said: "Mine eyes and My heart shall be there always."

But this promise did not apply in its full perfection to Solomon's material temple, which was destroyed after the death of Christ; the real eyes and heart of God were not there. This promise principally applies to the Church of Jesus Christ, of which Solomon's temple was but the shadow or mere figure. Hence, if there was a real and special presence of God in the temple of Jerusalem, how much more so must it be in the true Church of Jesus Christ which He came to establish, and where religion has attained its full perfection!—unless we maintain that the shadow is more than the substance, and that the Jews, who received but the shadows and figures of the good things to come in the New Testament, were more favored by God than Christians, who received the reality.

Moreover, this parable was not spoken by our Blessed Lord for the instruction of his contemporaries alone; it was also recorded in the Gospel for the benefit of

all Christians. "For what things soever were written, were written for our instruction," says the Apostle St. Paul.* We have seen in the parable of the leaven how Christ warns all the faithful, even of future generations, against the *leaven of the Pharisees.* For there are always and in all places, in as well as out of the true Church, men who imitate the Pharisees and the Publicans.

Now, suppose that two of these—one of each class—were to go together, and the scene described by our Saviour as having taken place in the temple of Jerusalem were to be reacted in one of our modern Christian churches. If it be a Protestant church, where will the Publican stand in order to be *afar off;* and where will the Pharisee go, that it can be said he is nearer, in the sense in which Jesus Christ understood it? He might be near to or afar off from the desk of the preacher; but nobody believes that *more than Solomon is there,* or that the spot where the preacher stands or sits is a place of more eminent holiness and sanctity than the Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple. Place him near to or afar off from the table of the communion service; no one believes that the Lord God has fixed His throne there or "put His name there for ever," and that His real eyes and His real heart are always there. There is no spot in a Protestant church believed to be more sacred than any other part of the building on account of a special and real presence of God on that spot. You may place the Pharisee or Publican in front or behind the pews; let them turn to the north or the south, the east or the west, to the floor or the ceiling—it is all the same; neither will be nearer to nor farther from God than

* Rom. xv. 4.

his sins place him. Of a nearer or farther bodily distance there can be no mention in such a place of worship.

But let us now transfer the scene to a Catholic church. If the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist is kept in the tabernacle of the altar, "behold, a greater than Solomon is here." * Though it be nothing more than a little wooden church—even a log-house—it is infinitely holier than the Holy of Holies, and contains a treasure far exceeding the glories of Solomon's temple, yea, more than all the treasures of earth and heaven. Here is the true ark of the new covenant, of which the Jews had only the shadow, wrapt in a cloud of mystery, dark and impenetrable during the daylight of faith, but fiery and shining in the darkness of human wisdom and prudence. The Lord of Hosts is here present; He is the "living bread that came down from heaven," infinitely superior to the manna that fed the Jews in the desert. Here is present, not the tables of the law, but the Divine Lawgiver Himself; not the blooming rod of Aaron, but the "High-Priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech," is enclosed in this lowly tabernacle; not graven images of cherubim extend their wings over this holy shrine, but real cherubim and seraphim, and myriads of the heavenly host, hover round this "tabernacle of God with men" †; not only His *name*, but also His real *eyes*, His real *heart* pierced on the cross by the lance, are *always* present in this holy place. If the Pharisee wants to come *near* he can step up to the altar-rails. If the poor Publican dare not approach, but remains standing *afar off*, bewailing his sins, it is at the

* St. Matt. xii. 42. † Apoc. xxi. 3.

farthest distance from the altar, from the Blessed Sacrament, close to the entrance, where in most of the Catholic churches the confessionals are placed. There he finds a proper place to strike his breast and acknowledge his sins to advantage, for, as our Blessed Lord said, he returns to his house justified.

Thus we see clearly that whether our Saviour intended this parable for Jews or Christians (but it is most probably intended for both), He had no reference whatever to a Protestant place of worship; for as He was to have no share in the invention of Protestantism, as it was to oppose His teaching and snatch from Him multitudes of souls, so the construction of its churches was also opposed to His design. In the Old Testament this parable applies to the temple of Solomon, in the New Testament to the Catholic Church; but nowhere in the mind of our Saviour was the Protestant Church to be found.

SECTION X.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

CHAPTER I.

HIS DEPARTURE FROM HOME.

ONE of the most beautiful parables contained in holy Scripture is that of the prodigal child. Who has ever read it without spiritual profit? Who has yet exhausted its beauties or learned all the lessons of God's sweet mercy which it contains? And if the reader is not *instructed in the kingdom of heaven,* a stranger to the Catholic faith, how few of its celestial beauties does he perceive, how many of the most significant circumstances are hidden from him! As for me, I do not pretend to exhaust the subject in the explanation which, with the light of Catholic faith, I am about to give. Many will read my sentiments, and discover, by the aid of God's grace, new beauties, and learn more truths than I ever saw in meditating on the subject. But let the reader follow me with simplicity and candor, and he will be convinced that the light before me, in which I explain every detail of this parable, *is not darkness;* even if the light of truth, to the great mortification of his self-esteem, force him to acknowledge that he himself is that prodigal child, and that the first part

of this parable contains nothing less than the history of his own error and revolt against the Church of God, he will pardon me on the principle laid down by the Holy Ghost: "Better are the wounds of a friend than the deceitful kisses of an enemy,"* especially if a speedy return to the father's house is necessary to ensure his salvation. The preachers of the word of God in the Catholic Church have to do the duty of the watch-dogs in the flock—if they do not succeed in turning back the strayed sheep by barking at it, they sometimes bite its ears, but only to save it and bring it back to the fold.

"A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them the substance."† There is no need of controversy as to who is meant by this certain man. God is the Father of all men, and the God-man, Jesus Christ, the second Adam, the Father of all Christians. But who are the *two sons?* Some say the angels and men, the two sorts of rational beings whom God created for His service and adopted for His own beloved children. But if mankind, the younger brother, fell away, so did a great number of the angels—the elder brother—of whom the Father says: "My son, thou art always with me," which cannot be said to the angels as a body, as they were not all faithful to God. Others say they are the just man and the sinner. But if there are just men who never sinned grievously but remained faithful to their Father, and others who did sin thus but were afterwards converted to God, so there are also many sinners who were never in

* Prov. xxviii. 6. † St Luke xv. 11.

the Father's house, never belonged to the Church, and who never received the gift of sanctifying grace; consequently the parable cannot be so well applied in this case as in the following.

St. Ambrose, one of the most illustrious doctors of the Church, gives us the true interpretation. He says: "He leaves the Father's house who leaves the Church." And, in fact, a member of the true Church of Christ, even if he commits a mortal sin, does not leave his Father's house but has behaved badly there, except his sin was of such a nature as to deserve excommunication—that is, expulsion from the Father's house. So that by the elder brother we are to understand all the faithful who always remained in the Church, which is the Father's house, where He abides "always, even to the consummation of the world"; and by the younger, those who separate from the Church of God, no matter whether it be for the purpose of joining some particular sect or of living according to their own notions. This interpretation receives strength by the distinction between the *elder* and the *younger* brother, for truth is older than error. Error is a denial of truth, consequently truth must exist before error can take place. Moreover, age is grave, sedate, rational; youth, on the contrary, is fiery, passionate, impetuous and unreasonable. Therefore such an act of perversity as to leave the house of a good father is more natural to the passion of youth than to the sedate gravity of old age. Hence, "the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me." For many years these two brothers lived peaceably together, in the same house, under the same kind

father, instructed by the same *tutors* and *governors*,* ate at the same table, and were both heirs of their father's substance. Such was the case in the Church of Jesus Christ before sects arose and separated themselves from the Church. All obeyed the same Father, all acknowledged the same Church, the Spouse of Christ, for their mother, all had but one faith, all partook of the same sacraments—in a word, all Christians were one and the same family, presided over by St. Peter and his successors—"the faithful and wise steward whom the Lord hath set over His family to give them their measure of wheat in due season." †

Now, it was not the *elder* but the *younger* of the two brothers that "said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me"; towards the end of the parable our Blessed Lord tells us that the father said to the elder brother: "Son, thou art always with me, and all I have is thine." The spiritual and the temporal interests of the elder brother depended on his remaining faithful in the house of his father. Had he left at any time he would have forfeited all the rights and privileges of the first-born, even as Esau when he sold his birthright to Jacob. In like manner the spiritual and the temporal interests of the Church of Rome require that she should keep the deposit of faith whole and entire. She has always on her side the promise of Christ to St. Peter: "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." With this unerring faith which the prayer of Christ obtained for her she was able at all times to fulfil the command of the Lord, "Confirm thy brethren." By means of this

* Gal. iv. 2. † St. Luke xii. 42.

unalterable and unflinching faith she maintained her supremacy over all the churches. Hence it was that, no matter how jealously the bishops of the various churches or dioceses, as we call them, watched over the preservation of their own rights, they faithfully submitted all their doubts and plans to the authority of the Roman See. Even heretics, though in vain, have sought most anxiously to have their errors sanctioned by the Pope of Rome as the surest means to facilitate their success. The Church of Christ was not yet one hundred years old when St. Polycarp, the aged Bishop of Smyrna and disciple of St. John the Evangelist, undertook a long and painful journey to Rome (even though St. John the Apostle was living close by) for the purpose of *accusing the heretic Marcion to the successor* of St. Peter, and asking his decision with regard *to the time Easter was to be celebrated by the Christians.* Marcion himself also went to Rome, hoping to obtain from the Holy See an approval of his errors; and history informs us that he met St. Polycarp at the entrance of one of the public baths, and had the impudence to say to the saint, "Do you know me?"; to which the saint replied, "I know thee to be the first-born of the devil." Such was the sentiment St. John's disciple entertained for the founders of sects who invent religions different from that of St. Peter and his successors, for whom Christ prayed "that his faith fail not."

But what motive induced the younger brother to throw off the yoke of paternal authority and quit the house of his Father? It was his own reasoning—the reasoning of passion, not of good sense. Had he consulted sound reason, common sense, he

would find every reason to stay at home, and none to leave it. Supposing even there was some disorder going on in his Father's house; that "men were asleep" when they should be watching; that the *tutors* and *governors* appointed by the Father were sometimes too severe or too remiss in the exercise of their duty, authority, etc.; was there not at hand the supreme paternal authority to remedy this evil—that of him who had the right to reform abuses when they occurred? Not every man, woman, and child was appointed to this office, but only the "faithful and wise steward whom the Lord hath set over His family." Therefore the cause alleged by the younger brother for leaving his Father's house was not a good one. The more I consider his behavior, his language, the very tone of voice in which he addresses his Father, the more I am convinced that he is impelled by passion, which is the foundation of all our disorders.

What an act of impudence on the part of this inexperienced youth to step before his Father, to whom he owes all that he is and has, with the air of a person that is wronged and seeks prompt satisfaction, as if his father did not deal fairly with him! "Father," he says, "give me the portion of substance!" Surely these words are dictated by anger. Bitterness has poisoned his heart; he scarcely knows what he says or to whom he speaks. He does not say, like a kind, respectful child, "Please, Father," or "Be so good," etc. No, he uses the imperative mood, as if speaking to an inferior, or at least to his equal. "Give," he says—"give me the portion of substance."

Every sect, every heresy, every schism has its

origin in human passion. Pride, covetousness, lust, or, as the Apostle St. John says, "the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life," * are the accursed trinity to which, either all together or singly, every founder of a sect has sacrificed his ancient faith in God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, and the holy Catholic Church.

The younger son thought he was not treated with justice in his Father's house; he fancied he had rights that were not respected; he wanted a liberty which could not be granted, he being still "under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the Father." † He wanted to enjoy himself; whereas he was told in his Father's house that it was not yet the time for enjoyment, but for labor and suffering. He did not wish to be controlled by any man, but to follow his own judgment in the pursuit of happiness, fully persuaded that the farther he went from his Father's house the greater should be his happiness. Are not these the very pleas advanced by those who fall away from the Church?

"Give me the portion of substance that falleth to me." What is this portion of substance? And what can poor, frail, fallen man claim as his own in the sight of his Creator? You answer me: "I claim the rights of man which your Church authorities suppress." I understand your meaning perfectly, but I know of no rights which man can claim independently of Almighty God as his own, except the right of doing his duty; but to fulfil his duty to his Father is what the prodigal child

* 1 Ep. St. John ii. 16. † Gal. iv. 2.

dislikes. If men were always as anxious to know and accomplish their duty to God as they are eager to know and guard their rights, not one sect or heresy would have arisen in the Church up to the present day. All heresies were conceived and brought forth in disobedience, pride, lust, and covetousness.

Hence we see it is not the Father who has to decide what is that "portion of substance that falleth to him." The younger son has a reasoning of his own, and whether it agrees with the views of the Father and the doctrine of the infallible teacher at Rome he cares not. According to his own reasoning, what is the "portion of substance that falleth to him"? He claims as his own will and liberty; nothing less will satisfy him. If there be anything more reserved for him by his Father's liberality, he cares nothing about it; he leaves it to the elder brother. But what is his portion? What is it that is left to him when he renounces the Father's favor—the sanctifying grace of God, the happy home of his Father, abounding in riches, where all had more than enough to satisfy them? Rejecting the supernatural, there is nothing left to him but the natural, and this is little indeed—a poor, poor inheritance: a human body with all its miseries, a human soul in the state of mortal sin, an intellect obscured, a memory weakened, a will inclining to evil, and perhaps—yes, let us not forget it—a printed copy of the Bible, purposely mistranslated from the original the better to suit sectarian purposes and exclude the dogmas of Catholicity. It is the *Testament*, the will of the Father; and no matter how far he goes from his Father and his Father's house, if he only reads and interprets for

himself this copy of the Father's will he imagines himself happier and better off than his elder brother, who always remained in his Father's house. "This," he says, "is what *I* believe." But who, except himself, will say: You are right; "this do and thou shalt live"? * Men dissatisfied with truth make theories for themselves, and endeavor to persuade themselves and others that their fabrications are infallible, whilst they deny and explain away the infallibility of the Church to which Christ promised the perpetual assistance and guidance of the unerring Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of Truth"!

"And he divided unto them his substance." To us it seems surprising that the Father yielded so easily to His son's request, not even saying a single word to detain His parting child. But such are the judgments of God! He is exceedingly good to those who seek Him with humble and contrite hearts, but terrible in His just anger against those whom pride excites to revolt against Him. And never is His punishment more fearful than when He ceases to speak to the sinner's heart, allowing him to have his own way without interfering.

The parable informs us that "not many days after, the younger son, gathering all together, went abroad into a far country, and there wasted his substance, living riotously." Ever since this wayward child began to loathe the yoke of parental authority he regarded his father's house as a prison and himself a slave; complained of every one and everything. In the midst of plenty he felt himself in want—in want of something not to be found in his father's house; therefore he must go abroad and seek it. His wicked

* St. Luke x. 28.

propensities beckon him far, far from the home of his father. Instead of entering into himself to discover the evil passions which reigned in his heart, and which were the real cause of his unhappiness, he fosters within his breast the spirit of rebellion, and accuses his father's house, though well regulated, of being the cause of his dissatisfaction. The Church of Jesus Christ is a well-regulated household; but in order to live happy and content therein man must obey. By disobedience mankind was ruined; by obedience they are restored.

No Catholic ever entertains even a thought about leaving the Church as long as he is submissive and obedient, for thus he bears a close resemblance to Him who, for our sake, "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." * But "whosoever revolteth and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God." † If he "hath not God" he can have no peace, and if he is not willing to seek it where alone it can be found—in a perfect submission to Christ and His Church, the kingdom of God on earth—it is no wonder that he looks abroad and seeks peace and contentment elsewhere, but always far, far from the Father's house, the Church. This far country is as far from the Father's house as error is distant from truth. There lies between them a whole impossibility, for what is untrue can never be true. Truth is where Christ is, who is *the Truth;* and Christ is with His Church "all days, even to the consummation of the world." Therefore truth is to be found only in His holy Church—the Father's house.

* Phil. ii. 8. † 2 Ep. St. John 9.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF APOSTASY.

"AND there he wasted his substance, living riotously." Behold what our Saviour thinks of a life outside the true Church, far from the Father's house! He calls it a waste, a waste of substance, a riotous life! There is no doubt that there are men outside the true Church who practise virtue, and even perform deeds of heroism; but what does all this amount to before God? They are acts of natural virtues such as the pagans themselves practised. St. Augustine calls them "great steps out of the way." They are not stamped with the seal of supernatural faith and grace, consequently cannot merit a supernatural reward. The Holy Ghost tells us: "The just man shall live by his faith," * which is, of course, the true faith; and "without faith," says the Apostle, "it is impossible to please God."† It is only the "branches that remain in the vine that bring forth fruit." ‡ The true faith is the rule of the true Church. It is a "gift of God," § a supernatural gift which enables the receiver to perform supernaturally good actions worthy of a supernatural reward. Hence, he that loses the faith and leaves the Church loses also this supernatural principle of action, and has nothing to fall back upon but the influence of passion and the dictates of his benighted natural reason. We must conclude that a life under such a rule is not directed to the supernatural end for which it was given—therefore a *waste*. Man loses his time, his labor, his sufferings, his strength, his soul and body, and all the graces he could obtain had he re-

* Hab. ii. 4. † Heb. xi. 6. ‡ St. John xv. 4. § Eph. ii. 8.

mained faithful in the Father's house. If his heart does not delight in God and heavenly things, he descends to seek for pleasures beneath him; he will delight in earthly things, "living riotously." "He wastes his substance."

"And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want." Temporal goods are limited, transitory goods which can never satisfy the desire for unlimited happiness which exists in the bosom of every rational being. No wonder that they give out at the end, and leave a void in the soul which no earthly good or fleeting pleasure can fill—a hunger, a famine. The joy which elated the prodigal on his arrival in that *far country*, where he found himself free from the paternal rule that governed his father's house, and where he could live according to his own notions and passions, was of very short duration. His happiness was that of a man in a state of intoxication, who fancies himself the wisest, the best, the most perfect, and the most contented being in God's creation, but, on recovering his senses, finds that he is indeed most wretched and miserable—if he does not fall into the horrors of delirium tremens, wherein his disordered mind sees nothing around him but fire and serpents.

That there are a great *famine* and *want* among those who fell away from the Catholic Church is very plain to any observer who has an opportunity of conversing with them. While every day brings forth new opinions, new theories, new systems to soothe the troubled consciences, and therefore new sects, new preachers, new churches, each one pretending to improve the old—as if God's truth awaited their coming to perfect it—there is at the present time

a fearful increase of those unfortunate souls who fall into an apparent apathy against all religion, a kind of spiritual lethargy from which nothing short of a miracle of God's grace can arouse them. These souls, growing weary of the forms of worship with which they are acquainted, turn away tired and unsatisfied, while they know not that in the Catholic Church alone they will find full and satisfactory reasons to command their firm belief in her teaching ("thy testimonies are made exceedingly credible"). * They only know the slanders and misrepresentations with which sectarian teachers have prejudiced their minds against her from their very infancy—so much so that as in ancient times the name of Catholic was identical with truth and goodness, so with them it signifies whatever is false, absurd, and wicked; while, on the other hand, common sense tells them that these numerous opposing sects cannot be the true Church of Jesus Christ; and as they are unable to distinguish which is true, and unwilling to condemn any one, they prefer to respect them all, and embrace none for fear of embracing the wrong one, and thus they *perish of hunger*.

Another remarkable fact is that non-Catholics are more eager to bring forward the subject of religion in their conversation with Catholics than Catholics are among themselves. The reason of this is very clear. He that *hath* the truth is satisfied and feels no need of searching for it; whereas he that has it not, and is anxious to find it, will search, and go on searching like the woman in the Gospel, who, having "lost a groat," went on searching until she found it. Again, a man that is sick or has some trouble is apt to

* Psalms xcii. 5.

speak of it. You will not converse with him five minutes before he will, of his own accord, inform you of his trouble. Perhaps it is the toothache, headache, or something troubles his mind, etc.; at all events, whatever the pain is, it relieves him to speak of it, for the human heart naturally craves sympathy. In like manner non-Catholics like to speak on religion, because in their religion, whatever it may be, they feel sick and uneasy; they feel a want of light, of certitude; and whatever they may say in praise of the glorious Reformation, they are convinced that Protestantism can never satisfy them; they are (would to God that they would acknowledge it!) like the prodigal son, who, after he had spent all, and there "came a mighty famine in that country, began to be in want."

"And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm to feed swine." The picture becomes more and more gloomy in the career of the unfortunate prodigal. The longer the erring child stays away from his Father's house, the more wretched he becomes. Were he not blinded by passion and prejudice he would at once open his eyes to the truth, and acknowledge that he erred in following the evil counsels of his heart, and that he must hasten to retrace the false step he has taken. Already he cannot help seeing that his present condition is worse than when he lived in the paternal mansion. He is now *in want*—what he never was before. In his Father's house there was always an abundance of bread. But no, he will not acknowledge yet that he did wrong in leaving his Father's house; he still cherishes the idea that his fortune and happiness are to be found

in that *far country,* far away from God, far from the Catholic Church. And having refused to be under the *tutors* and *governors* appointed *by the Father as long as the heir was a child,* he goes now of his own free-will and offers his services to a stranger —in fact, an enemy to his Father! For who is "the citizen of that country"? As there are but two kingdoms in this world, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, and as no one can belong to one without renouncing the other, so, in like manner, all those who renounce the true Church renounce Jesus Christ and His kingdom, and take service in the kingdom of Satan, whom our Saviour calls "the prince of this world." * And as the kingdom of Christ is founded on truth and teaches all truth, so that of the evil one is founded on falsehood —a kingdom of error; for Satan was a liar from the beginning. Hence, the *Father's house* represents the kingdom of Christ, while that of Satan is represented by that *far country* where the prodigal lived riotously and "devoured his substance with harlots." Farms of every description could be had in that distant country to accommodate those wandering souls which, displeased with the demands of truth, abandon the true Church, the choice garden of the celestial King, where alone the flowers and fruits of true virtue can be found, to enter on the wide, uncultivated fields of error and infidelity. The wretched prodigal has no need to dedicate his services in a direct and formal manner to the prince of this world, the evil spirit. No man in his senses would do this, neither does Satan exact it; he only requires of the son to throw off the yoke of paternal authority, abandon

* St. John xiv. 30.

his Father's house, and follow his own inclinations or those of others, provided only they are in opposition to the doctrine of the true Church, which is the will of the heavenly Father. And when once the poor soul is under the dominion of this prince of darkness, he will, if possible, drag it by degrees to the lowest point of degradation, which is clearly pointed out to us in the fact that he "sent him to his farm to feed swine."

As the whole parable has a spiritual application, there can be no doubt that by the farm is meant one of the many different religious establishments wherein the wicked spirit, under the pretext of religion, attaches his dupes more and more to the love of the world and the gratifications of their passions. Therefore we may say without fear of slander that the "citizens of that country" are all those founders and supporters of sects who, having rejected the spiritual authority established by Jesus Christ, set up churches for themselves and believe more in the orthodoxy of their own political faith than of their religious preaching, and have more at heart to please men and gain the esteem of the world than to be true ministers of the Gospel.

A prodigal child, having left the true Church, the "Father's house," cannot live long without a religion; and as he is not willing to return, nay, even shudders at the idea, he joins some church of that "far country," not because he is convinced that it is as good as his Father's house, where there is an abundance of bread, but because it is the nearest, the most fashionable in the place, coincides the most with his own ideas, gives the greatest liberty to his inclinations, etc. And the "citizen of that

country"—that is, the minister of that particular sect which he embraces—is but too willing to receive him as another straying sheep from Rome, and presents him to his congregation as a new proof of his own apostolic zeal. Although he was always a very poor specimen of a Catholic, a cause of scandal to his brethren, and a constant trouble in his Father's house, still he can be *a respectable member of the new church*, and may be turned to the best advantage in promoting the interest of that sect.

"And he sent him into his farm to feed swine." In his Father's house he was too proud to obey, to submit to the divine will as a son of the Father or a child of God; but on the farm of the citizen of that far country he is content to fill the position of swine-herd! The swine represent the unruly passions of man, which have their seat in his animal nature; and when man is not guided in all his actions by the "science of the Spirit," * the divine faith, he yields to the cravings of his passions, which resemble swine—sensual, voluptuous, unmortified, always grunting, ever quarrelsome and impatient, never more content than when they can bury themselves in the filth and mire of corruption. Like the pagans of old, who, "despairing, gave themselves up to the working of all uncleanness," † the soul, despairing of finding the truth, rejects religion entirely, and returns to the so-called *big church* "whose God is the belly," ‡ having neither head, nor heart, nor soul to care for, but only a stomach and rebellious flesh. Hence arises the insatiable hunger that devours the poor prodigal; for these swine are not easily satisfied.

"And he would fain have filled his belly with the

* Ecclus. xvii. 6. † Eph. iv. 19. ‡ Phil. iii. 19.

husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him." As he finds no pleasure in high and holy things, he turns to the lowest. He wishes to enjoy the pleasures of this world, but finds them too scant to satisfy his hunger. He reads infidel and immoral books, but what are these if not "husks which the swine do eat"—pods containing but a few insipid grains, seed for other husks? Alas! there is no good Father on that farm to watch over the poor child, and give him sound, substantial bread to satisfy his hunger. Private judgment has led him to question the right of his Father in keeping him under the tutorship of his elder brother, and induced him to decide in the negative. The "right of private judgment" opens to him every book he finds on the way; were it even "husks the swine did eat," he claims the right and privilege to eat them. It is only the Catholic Church that forbids her children to read such books; there they are considered bad, unwholesome food, causing sickness and bad taste. And even if the younger brother had not departed, and *having spent all* his substance in his Father's house, and being hungry, would crave after these husks, *no man* of God would be so imprudent as to *give them to him.*

Consider here all the motives which at various times have induced men born and educated in the bosom of the true Church to leave it. You will find, without one exception, that some ungoverned passion was the cause of their apostasy. Pride, ambition, envy, jealousy, covetousness, lust, etc., and, in every case, a stubborn, untractable disposition of mind and heart, were the prime movers of such a departure. And what are these but swine greedy after

husks which the unfortunate prodigal disputes with them ?

And here let us remember that our Saviour spoke this parable before the Jews, who were forbidden not only to eat swine's flesh, but even to keep such animals. Hence the Jews, who had a natural horror and disgust for these animals, must have been much more horrified than we are when they saw the prodigal reduced to such want and degradation. It is, therefore, evident that in this case the master-hand of our Lord lays on the strongest colors, in order to depict the wretched condition of such as forsake the true Church to cleave to the "citizen of that country," and at the same time discovers to us the cruelty and hard-heartedness of their new master. Notwithstanding all this, how many will read this beautiful parable, deplore the unfortunate lot of the straying child, and believe themselves to be in the house of that good Father—nay, even at His table—whereas, in fact, they are on the *farm* of the *citizen* in the *far country*, in the same condition as that poor wanderer, who "would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him"!

CHAPTER III.

REPENTANCE AND RETURN TO HIS FATHER.

IT was a fortunate circumstance in the life of the younger brother to have lived some time in the Father's house, to have been acquainted with its management, and to have partaken of its plenty. His

life of dissipation and misery had not obliterated the remembrance of the happy days which he spent in the company of his elder brother under the paternal care of a wise and loving Father. He had disregarded it, like many other things, but he had not lost it; and herein he had an advantage over those who, less favored than himself, were never in the house of his Father, the true Church of Christ, but were born and educated on one of the farms of the citizen of that *far country,* though perhaps in a more honorable capacity than that of feeding swine. They only know of the Father's house by the calumnies and misrepresentations spread by other prodigal children and maintained and endorsed by the *citizen of that far country,* who is the sworn enemy of this good Father, and leaves no means untried, however wicked and blasphemous, to retain in the service of his farms all those under his dominion. They may go from one farm to another, change their occupation for some other—anything, provided they do not return to the Father's house. In other words, they may change their religion, go from one church to another, believe more or less, or even nothing, if they choose; the *prince of this world,* who is the spirit of darkness, the father of lies, and the founder of all sects, will raise no opposition as long as his subjects do not return to the Catholic Church, the indestructible residence of the Father and elder brother. Speak to them of the incomparable beauty of that house built by Divine Wisdom Himself, the Word of God incarnate; of its enduring solidity and firmness, being built *upon a rock;* of its great wealth in *treasures* and *pearls* of great price; of its inexhaustible store of "the Bread of the strong," the

"Living Bread that came down from heaven," * and the wine *springing* forth *virgins;* mention the unlimited authority and power of doing good conferred on the "faithful and wise steward whom the Lord hath set over His family," etc.—you are believed to exaggerate, perhaps to be an impostor; but it will be a rare event indeed if they believe your word.

Fortunately the prodigal child of the parable had been in the Father's house, and knew from experience that there was no exaggeration. Therefore, at last "returning to himself, he said: How many hired servants in my Father's house abound with bread: and I here perish with hunger."

Misery opens his eyes to the truth and discovers to him the real cause of his misfortune. Before it was his Father's house and the manner of life he was obliged to lead under tutors and governors that he considered the source of all his troubles. Hence he sought happiness far from the paternal roof; he tried a licentious life, which is not the liberty of the children of God, and he became miserable; he tried obedience, but under another master, and he is reduced to the lowest rank in society. He is perishing of hunger, and his excessive hunger and humiliation force him to turn his eyes upon himself and acknowledge within his own heart that his unruly passions are the true cause of his distress. "Thy perdition is thy own, O Israel!" † No man perishes but by his fault. St. John says that Christ, the "true light, enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world" ‡ —that is, He gives to every man so much grace and light that, if he co-operates with it and follows it, he will obtain other graces, and finally be led to salva-

* St. John vi. 51. † Osee xiii. 9. ‡ St. John i. 9.

tion. If this light shows him that he is wrong, or even causes him to doubt about it, and man heeds it not and takes no trouble to be set right in a matter of such importance, then "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it,"* and man will have to blame himself and perish for it, if he remains in darkness. Hence let every man *return to himself* and begin his conversion by accusing himself, and not others, for his past errors. "The beginning of good works," observes St. Augustine, "is the confession of bad works." So long as the prodigal child does not accuse himself and acknowledge his faults he will remain on the farm, perhaps perish with the swine; but he will never return to the house of his Father.

"How many hired servants," etc. In the Father's house there are two classes of servants who obey Him: the children, who, having perfect charity and being actuated by a motive of filial love and affection for the Father, obey without regard to reward or punishment. They love to do the Father's will because they love Him. But the other class are those who obey for hire, like servants. They obey because they expect a reward and will be rewarded most liberally by the Father for every service they have rendered; they abstain from offending Him through fear of punishment. This latter class, though much more imperfect than the former, are nevertheless entitled to have their food at the Father's table as well as the children of the house. "How many hired servants in my Father's house abound with bread!" And truly the Church of Jesus Christ is a real Bethlehem, which being interpreted means *a house of bread.*

* St. John i. 5.

Believe with the Catholic Church in the mystery of the Real Presence of Christ in the holy Eucharist, and you will see clearly how beautifully all this is verified in her. Christ, the true and eternal Word of God, is for ever with His Church. "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."* He is identified with His doctrine. He is identified with the truth. His doctrine is truth, for He is *the Truth.* This Divine Truth always abides in His Church, and is at hand in abundance for all nations, in every clime, and for all time to come. But if you consider Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist, He is the "*Living Bread*"—that is, a bread that has life and gives life—because it is His *flesh for the life of the world;* and of this also there is an abundance in the Church, so that even those who serve God from selfish motives, and for the sake of their own interest keep His commandments, obey His laws, and refrain from sin, are not excluded from partaking of this heavenly banquet.

"How many hired servants . . . abound with bread: and I here perish with hunger." Note here the contrast: The hired servants in his Father's house—therefore those that are the last in the true Church of Christ—however imperfect they may be, as long as they endeavor to serve and please God, are infinitely better off than *I,* a child of the Father, a joint-heir of the elder brother—*I,* far from my Father's house, far from the true Church; "there" on the farm, in a *far country,* a servant of that citizen; here among *swine,* the filthiest of brutes, and I am so degraded as to be their servant. *I here perish* for want

* St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

of the true word of God, the bread of life ; for want of the true Bread of heaven, the life-giving Eucharist, I *perish of hunger*—for what are all those shallow, high-sounding words of the sermons preached to me on this farm but *husks* which nourish swine ? What is the bread and wine which the farmer or minister gives, with the express understanding that it is not the real body and blood of Christ, but only a figure —what is this to my famishing soul when the real body and blood which abounds in my Father's house is not here ? I am perishing of hunger ; and let the *citizen of that country* say what he will to detain me, it is certain if I remain here any longer disputing for the husks the swine do eat, the word of Jesus Christ will be verified in me: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life everlasting in you."* Therefore it is clear to my mind that if I stay here any longer, far away from my Father's house, I *perish*, I *perish of hunger;* for there is nothing on this farm, nothing outside of the true Church, that can satisfy the wants of my immortal soul. Hence "I will arise and will go to my Father, and say to Him : Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee ; I am not now worthy to be called Thy son ; make me as one of Thy hired servants."

Were the Bible a Protestant one, and were it to contain Protestant doctrine, our parable would end here ; for, according to their teaching, all that is required of a sinner to be reconciled to God is to repent of his sins and confess them to God alone. This done, he is forgiven and restored to the Father's house. But no ; the prodigal son of the Gospel, al-

* St. John vi. 54.

though he had once fallen away from the true Church and joined a sect, is now a Catholic penitent; he repents in the manner required by the Catholic Church. If repentance alone was sufficient he repented already while he was yet on *the farm feeding swine;* but, like every well-informed Catholic, he knew that this was necessary, but not sufficient. He had to leave the farm, the husks, and the swine; without bidding farewell to the citizen of that country, or asking his leave or advice, he had to arise and go to his Father—not only to the Father in heaven, but also to the father on earth, who by profession is the father of sinners, to whom Christ "has given the ministry of reconciliation," * and who receives sinners for and in place of the heavenly Father. To him he had to confess his sin and from him obtain pardon. "And rising up he came to his Father," without any human respect or regard for the criticisms of the world, without even demanding wages for his service from his employer, or considering the difficulties to be encountered on his journey. Neither is he deterred by the shame and confusion which he must naturally feel on reaching the paternal home. He hastens to find his Father while he has grace and strength to do so; nothing can induce him to delay or slacken his steps. He knows too well the danger of delay, and remembering these words of the Psalmist, "To-day if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts," † he rises up and comes to his Father. "And when he was yet a great way off his Father saw him and was moved with compassion."‡

Behold what a marvellous change in the conduct

* 2 Cor. v. 18. † Ps. xciv. 8. ‡ St. Luke xv. 20.

of the Father at the return of his prodigal son compared with that at his departure. When the son turned away from his Father, as he would from a stranger, the Father also turned away his affection from this ungrateful child, and treated him not as a son, but as a stranger. He divided his substance, as the prodigal demanded, and let him go where he chose. But now, when the child has retraced his erring steps and directed his affection to his Father and his Father's house, he is again the same kind, loving Father. He shows no contempt for the poor wanderer, but welcomes him with a merciful and compassionate heart. Knowing the weakness and frailty of the repenting sinner, he at once comes to meet him, and is the first to stretch out his arms to embrace him and bestow the kiss of forgiveness.

"His father saw him" in all his poverty and degradation; but instead of giving way to a just anger and meting out to his son a well-deserved punishment, "he was moved with compassion, and, running to him, fell upon his neck and kissed him." When the prodigal left his Father's house he was proud and stiff-necked, and would bend to no authority; and such a one is hated, despised, and condemned by the Father, for "God resisteth the proud."* But now he has a pliant neck, bent and curbed by adversity and humiliations, ready to receive not only the yoke of paternal authority as a child, but even the yoke of servitude—willing to be the last of the hired servants in the Father's house. And this humble, submissive neck is something so beautiful and attractive in the eyes of the heavenly Father that, running to him, "He falls upon his

*1 Ep. St. Peter v. 5.

neck and kisses him." "He giveth His grace to the humble." * This is the kiss of peace, well known to the Catholic penitent when he receives absolution after a good, sincere, and contrite confession, but entirely unknown outside of the Church. It is "the hidden manna," † whose taste is known only to those who receive it. Therefore it is useless to describe it to such as never tasted it. They have no idea of it, and would not believe it.

And the son said to him: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee: I am not now worthy to be called thy son." As a Catholic he knows that he has sinned not only before the Father, but also against heaven—that is, all the saints and angels of heaven. As the saints and angels love God with a love far exceeding that which they bear to themselves, they would rather be annihilated than see this infinitely good and loving God offended. As a dutiful son feels and regards the injuries done to his father even more than if done to himself, so all heaven is offended when God is offended. The prodigal son confesses the full malice and extent of his sin with the utmost grief and sorrow. No wonder, then, that he obtains pardon so easily. "For thy soul be not ashamed to say the truth. For there is a shame that bringeth sin, and there is a shame that bringeth glory and grace." ‡ "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity." § "Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be saved." ‖

Now, it may be objected that even outside of

* 1 Ep. St. Peter v. 5. † Apoc. ii. 17. ‡ Ecclus. iv. 24, 25.
§ 1 St. John i. 9. ‖ St. James v. 16.

the Church sinners confess their sins, but to God alone, not *to another*—the sick to the priest, as St. James indicates in the chapter above quoted. The prodigal son did not confess to the heavenly Father only. Had he been a Protestant, and had everything been done in Protestant fashion, he indeed would have confessed to the heavenly Father only, and no man would have become cognizant of his degradation. The Father himself would have done what, in the parable, he orders his servants to do. But Father and son were Catholic, and all things were done in a good Catholic manner.

NOTE.—No matter what Protestantism has said or written, ever since its establishment, against the holy Sacrament of Penance as practised in the Catholic Church, which requires a confession of sins to a priest, joined to contrition and absolution, it is an undeniable fact that Luther himself believed in it, and defended and enjoined it, as is evident from the following passage in his works. In his sermon on the Sacrament of Penance he says: "Der rechte Weg und die richtige Weisz, ohne welche kein andere zu finden ist das Hochwürdige Gnadenreich heilig Sakrament der Busz, welches Gott zu Trost allen Sündern gegeben hat. Da er St. Peter an statt der gantzen Geistlichen Kirchen die Schlüssel gab und sprach (St. Matth. xvi.): 'Alles was du auff Erden binden wirst, soll auch im Himmel gebunden seyn, und alles was du auff Erden lösen wirst, soll auch los sein im Himmel.' (The true way and right manner to obtain pardon, and without which no other can be found, is the sacred and grace-giving holy Sacrament of Penance which God has instituted for the comfort of all sinners when He gave the keys to His clergy in the person of St. Peter, and said: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shalt be loosed also in heaven.") Again, in the year 1546, the very year in which he died, he wrote against the theologians of Louvain (tom. viii., Jen., fol. 382a): "Dasz die Busz, sambt dem Gewalt der absolution oder Löse-Schlüssel ein Sakrament seye, bekennen wir gern. Den sie hat die Verheissung und gelaubt Vergebung der Sünden um Christie willen." (We willingly confess that penance and the power of absolving or the keys of loosing is a sacrament. For it has the promise and faith in the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake.)

In defending himself against Doctor Eck, Luther speaks as follows (tom. i., Jen., fol. 341a): "Zum andern Doctor Eck mehr, dasz ich die Reu vernichte und unnöthig achte, die Beicht beschneide, und die Genugthuung verwerffe, dasz erdichtet er auf mich, den meine Bücher sagen anderst." (Doctor Eck says, secondly, that I do away with contrition, and consider it unnecessary; that I curtail confession and reject satisfaction; all this he

imputes falsely to me, for my books speak differently.) In his sermon on the Sacrament of Penance (fol. 65b) he thus expresses himself: "Dasz nicht abermahl jemand mir die Schuld gebe, ich verbiete Werk, so sage ich, man soll mit allem Ernst Reu und Leyd haben, Beichten und gute Werke thun." (Lest somebody should again charge me with prohibiting works of penance, I say, man ought to have in all earnestness sorrow and contrition, confess and do good works). Fol. 66b we find the following passage: "Darumb so gehört in die heimbliche Beicht keine Sünde, denn die man öffentlich für Todsünden erkennet, und die das Gewissen zur Zeit drucken und ängsten; dan soll man alle Sünden beichten, so müste man alle Augenblicke beichten. . . . Doch ist es nicht ohne Besserung, dasz man auch geringe Sünden beichtet, sonderlich so man sonst keine Todsünd weisz." Tom. i., Jen., fol. 512a: "Die heimbliche Beicht achte ich, wie die Jungfrauschaft und Keuschheit, ein sehr köstlich und heylsam Ding. O es solt allen Christen gar leyd sein, dass die heimbliche Beicht nicht wäre, und Gott auss Hertzen danken, dass sie uns erlaubt und gegeben ist." Fol. 513a: "Die heimbliche Beicht ist ein auffgethaner Gnadenschatz, darinnen Gott fürhält, und anbeut seine Barmherzigkeit, und Vergebung aller Sünde." Fol. 516b: "Dasz wir aber willig und gern beichten, sollen unszwo Ursachen reitzen. Erstlich das heilige Kreutz, das ist, die Schand und Scham, dasz der Mensch sich willig entblöszt für einem andern Menschen, und sich selbst verklagt, und verhöhnet, das ist ein köstlich Stück von dem heiligen Kreutz. O wann wir wüsten, was Straff solche willige Schamröthe fürkäme, und wie ein gnädigen Gott sie machet, dasz der Mensch ihm zu Ehren sich selbst so vernichtiget, und demüthiget, wir würden die Beicht über tausend Meil holen." Fol. 517a: "Es ist kein Fasten, kein Betten, kein Ablasz, kein Wallen, kein Leyden nimmer so gut, als diese willige Scham und Schand, darin der Mensch recht im Grunde zu nicht, demüthig, das ist, der Gnaden begreifflich wird. Und wollte Gott, es wäre im Brauch öffentlich für aller Welt alle heimliche Sünden zu bekennen, wie Augustinus gethan hat! *O Gott!* wie gnadenreiche Menschen solten wir da gar schnelle werden, da wir sonst mit keinem strengen Leben nimmer hinkommen. Und was ist's, dasz wir uns für einen einzigen Menschen so fast schämen, so wir doch am Sterben (da nicht lang hin ist) solche Scham ausstehen müssen für Gott, allen Engeln und Teuffeln, da est wird tausendmal schwärlicher zugehen; welchem wir allem mit dieser geringen Scham für einem Menschen leichtlich mögen zuvorkommen." Fol. 517b: "Die andere Ursach und Reitzung zur willigen Beicht ist die theure, und edle Verheissung Gottes in den Sprüchen Matt. 16: 'Was du wirst aufflösen, soll losz seyn'; Johan. ult.: 'Welchem ihr die Sünde vergebt, dem sollen sie vergeben seyn.'"

In the year of his death (1546) Luther wrote in his Little Catechism (tom. viii., Jen., fol. 351a): "Für Gott soll man aller Sünden sich schuldig geben, auch die wir nicht erkennen. Aber für dem Beichtiger sollen wir allein die Sünden bekennen, die wir wissen und fühlen im Hertzen. Welches sind die? da siehe deinen Stand an nach den zehen Gebotten, ob du Vatter, Mutter, Sohn, Tochter, Herr, Frau, Knecht seyest; ob du ungehorsam, untreu, unfleissig gewest seyest; ob du jemand Leyd gethan hast mit Worten, oder Werken; ob du gestohlen, versäumt, verwahrloset, Schaden gethan hast." Fol. 66b: "Thus, therefore, no sins belong to this secret confession but

such as are known to be mortal sins, and which at the time aggravate and prick the conscience. . . . But it is not without amendment that we also confess lesser sins, particularly if we know of no mortal sin." Tom i., Jen , fol. 512a : "I esteem secret confession, like virginity and chastity, to be a very precious thing. Oh ! it should be a matter of grief to all Christians if there were no secret confession, and all should thank God from their hearts that it is allowed and given to us." Fol. 513a : "Secret confession is an open treasure of grace, wherein God proposes and offers His mercy and forgiveness of all sins." Fol. 516b Luther assigns the causes why we should confess willingly : "That we should confess willingly and readily two causes should excite us. First, the holy cross—*i.e.*, the shame and confusion that a man willingly suffers who lays open the secrets of his heart to another man to accuse and humble himself. This is a precious portion of the holy cross. Oh ! if we knew what punishment such a willing shame prevents, and how merciful it makes God in our regard, when man annihilates and humbles himself thus, we would seek confession more than a thousand miles off."

"No fasting, no prayer, no indulgence, no pilgrimage, no suffering is so good as this willing shame and confusion, whereby man thoroughly annihilates himself, becomes humble—*i e.*, capable of receiving grace. And would to God it was the custom to confess our secret sins publicly before the world as St. Augustine did ! O God ! what rich treasures of grace we should receive, such as no other severity of life would purchase for us. And what is it that we are so much ashamed of before one man when at the hour of death (which is not far off) we have to suffer such confusion before God, all His angels, and the devils ? Then it will be a thousand times more heavy. And all this we can easily prevent by the lesser shame of confessing to one man. The second cause and inducement to confess our sins willingly is the sacred and generous promise of God in the texts, Matt. xvi., "Whatsoever thou shalt loose shall be loosed," and John xx., "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven him."

Luther also wrote in his Little Catechism, the very year of his death (1546) : "We should acknowledge ourselves guilty of all sins before God, even those which we do not remember. But before the confessor we should confess only those which we know and feel in our hearts. That is, you are to consider your state of life according to the Ten Commandments ; if you are father, mother, son, or daughter, master, mistress, servant ; if you have been disobedient, faithless, negligent ; if you injured any one by word or action ; if you stole, neglected, wasted, or damaged in any way your neighbors' property." Thus far Luther.

CHAPTER IV.

RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL TO THE FATHER'S HOUSE.

"AND the Father said to his servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and

put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry." "The first robe" is nothing less than the sanctifying grace of God which Adam lost for himself and his posterity, but which was again restored to us through Jesus Christ in holy baptism; and if we have the misfortune to lose it by a mortal sin committed after baptism, then there is no other means left whereby it can be restored but a contrite and humble reception of the sacrament of penance through the absolution of the priest, the father of sinners. Protestant teaching holds that God, by Himself only, forgives sins and restores to the sinner the robe of sanctifying grace which he had lost by sin, according to that saying of the Pharisees: "He blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but God only?"* The Catholic Church teaches that God forgives sins on earth through the ministry of those men to whom Christ gave power to forgive sins. And in order to prove that *man on earth* could exercise this power given him by God, Jesus Christ by a miracle cured the man sick of the palsy: "That you may know that the son of man (not only the Son of God) hath power on earth to forgive sins,"† etc. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost (by whose power sins are forgiven): whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."‡ Hence, in the parable before us it was not the Father Himself (if we understand by the Father the heavenly Father, as Protestants do) who again puts on the prodigal son "the first robe," but His servants: "The Father said to His servants."

These servants, before putting on the *first robe,* had

* St. Matt. ix. 3; St. Mark ii. 7. † St. Mark ii. 10. ‡ St. John xx. 22, 23.

to strip off the rags of prejudice and evil habits wherewith he was clothed in that *far country;* they had to wash away the filth he had contracted in the service of the swine; they were obliged to dress and cleanse his sores, and bind up the bleeding wounds which he had received in his wanderings. In short, before clothing him again with the first robe they had to do all and everything which a Catholic priest does for a penitent before he gives absolution, and therewith the first robe of sanctifying grace, lost by sin. For this examination of the son's condition, this washing and cleansing and dressing of wounds, are done by the priests in the confessional, who are the ministers of God's mercy on earth. There the misfortunes of the prodigal are exposed, and remedies applied to every ailment, with that *first robe,* the sanctifying grace of God, the proper habit of the children of God.

"Bring forth quickly the first robe." The good and merciful Father cannot bear to see His beloved child clothed in the garments of sin and error. "Bring it forth quickly, and put it on him." (He does not say: *I* will put it on him.) Moreover, "put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." The only occasion when a Protestant minister puts a ring on the hand of any person is at a marriage ceremony. If, then, they claim this parable for their sect, they must perform the marriage ceremony on every person they receive into their church. And what if he or she be already married or bound by a vow of celibacy?

In a Catholic sense this *ring* on the hand is nothing else than the *firm resolution of amendment,* an essential part of the sacrament of penance, equivalent

to a renewal of the baptismal vow. In holy baptism the soul becomes the spouse of Jesus Christ. She vows to Him everlasting love and fidelity, as a wife to her husband, and he styles her "My sister, My spouse." * When, therefore, she leaves the Father's house and commits mortal sin she breaks her marriage vow and becomes a shameless adulteress. To be reconciled, and to take once more her position as a child of God and spouse of Jesus Christ, she has to renew her oath of fidelity to Him ; and every Catholic penitent knows well that no confession of sins is valid, that the sacrament of penance imparted by the holy absolution of the priest is null and void—nay, even sacrilegious—without sincere contrition and sorrow for past sins, which implies the firm resolution of sinning no more, therefore of keeping sacred and inviolate the oath of allegiance to Jesus Christ, to whom the soul was betrothed in holy baptism.

But what shall we understand of the "shoes on his feet"? They signify the special advice and direction which the Catholic penitent receives from his confessor in the sacred tribunal of penance. The prodigal son, having spent all, had lost even the shoes from his feet—that is, all the good advice and direction given him in his Father's house, that he might not "dash his foot against a stone" † of scandal that was laid in his way. In fact, they were the first thing he cast off as a troublesome encumbrance after leaving his Father's house, or, at least, were soon worn out by his *riotous living*. These bare and unprotected feet have walked evil ways, thorny, stony, craggy ways; for the way of the evil-doer is hard. Hence these feet need protection. Sermons, public

* Cant. iv. 9. † Psalm xc. 12.

instructions, religious books, circulating at large, are shoes intended for everybody, but not adapted to the feet of all persons. What is too large for one may be too narrow or too short for another; and particularly if the feet are sore, wounded, or in the process of healing, they will in such a case require shoes specially adapted to their condition. If the shoes are too large they easily fall off; if they are too short or too narrow they will be rejected by the wearer. In like manner, if some authors make these shoes too large for the feet of the rich and too narrow for the poor, they will benefit neither and lose the fruit of their labors.

Catholics, who are always in the Father's house, under the care of His servants, the true sacerdotal ministers of Christ, have always the advantage of others in this respect, for they can, under every circumstance, procure the shoes that will exactly fit and protect them from defilement and injury, besides being a source of comfort and strength through the oftentimes narrow and thorny path of salvation. There is no doubt or difficulty in their way that they cannot get over in safety, if they consult their spiritual director, in or out of the tribunal of penance, and follow carefully the directions they receive. For the tribunal of penance is instituted not only to forgive sins committed after baptism, but also for the interior guidance and direction of the soul. "The kingdom of God is within you," * says the Saviour. Therefore He must have established a government to rule and direct that interior kingdom of man, and to govern his thoughts, feelings, and desires, just as

* St. Luke xvii. 21.

well as there are persons appointed to govern his exterior actions, which are only the accomplishment of his interior volitions; and these interior directions are the shoes which the Father ordered his servants to put on his repentant son. These servants are educated, trained, ordained for that office, like skilful physicians, who, having graduated with distinction, spend a great part of their life in the hospitals and dissecting-rooms before beginning outdoor practice. I am not afraid of asserting too much if I maintain that it is impossible for a sectarian minister to be a proper guide in spiritual matters, for the simple reason that he knows little or nothing about the interior life of the soul. Making every allowance for his honesty, sincerity, piety, talent, learning, and, above all, what is most necessary for a spiritual guide, good common sense—granting he may possess these qualities, he still lacks experience. Hence, he is like a physician who derived all his medical knowledge from his books, but scarcely ever attended a sick person or was present at a post-mortem examination. The soul as well as the body requires a guide or physician who has practical knowledge of her interior life, her maladies, her dangers, her difficulties, her struggles and temptations. Of all these diseases of the soul, the knowledge of the Protestant minister is confined to the experience of his own life, or what a few others may have told him concerning theirs—for nobody was obliged to tell him the whole truth. Thus he may preach very fine, touching sermons on a mother's love, or a sister's affection, or a father's care; he may be well able to give private advice to those who are in love about courtship, marriage, and such things, in which he

himself may have gained the mastery or was sadly disappointed; but what does he know, or what can he know, of the sufferings and temptations to which different souls are subject, and which vary, perhaps, hundreds of times in the same person, according to their dispositions, time, and circumstances? He may be able to judge about the state of his own conscience, and perhaps also that of his wife, if she is open-hearted enough to manifest it to him; but certainly this is all. How many thousand sins could be prevented if conscientious Protestants had the advantage which Catholics enjoy, under the inviolable secrecy of confession, to manifest their spiritual wants and obtain the necessary desired direction!

Clothed once more with the *first* and beautiful robe of sanctifying grace, adorned with the ring of firm resolution, and fortified by the shoes of correction and friendly counsel, the prodigal son is restored to his former dignity, not, as he desired, "a hired servant" (although even such a one is infinitely better off than the *citizen of that far country* or any of his colleagues), but as a son and joint-heir of the elder brother. He is as rich as if he never left the house of his Father; and if he had every reason to rejoice at his kind reception and readmission to his Father's house and comfort, the joy of the Father over his return is still greater. His joy knows no bounds; the day of his son's return is a day of festivity for the whole house—that is, the whole Church; hence the command: "Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us make merry." The joy of the Father finds its expression in a festivity, the festivity in a banquet, the banquet in the killing of the fatted calf—as every festival day in the Catholic Church

is celebrated by the offering of the Holy Sacrifice and partaking of the heavenly banquet, Jesus Christ, in the most Blessed Eucharist.

Hence I do not speak irreverently if I say that by the fatted calf is understood the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Among the Jews the calf was the symbol of innocence, as the lamb is with us. Learned antiquarians inform us that among the hieroglyphics found in the ancient monuments of Egypt, the first-born of a family was represented by a calf. This fatted calf was to be killed and sacrificed, and, in its state of sacrifice, it was the banquet that gladdened the hearts of all the inmates of the house. Even to the present day, when the prodigal son returns and is reconciled to his Father, clothed anew with His sanctifying grace, he is admitted to the Holy Sacrifice, and during the Holy Sacrifice to the heavenly banquet of holy Communion, where he receives Jesus Christ within himself and becomes one with Him, as He is one with the Father. "He that eateth Me, the same shall live by Me."* This is the true way of "making merry" in the Catholic Church.

"Because this my son was dead and is come to life again: was lost and is found." This remark of the Father destroys completely freedom of opinion, or the doctrine that man can be saved in every religion, and firmly establishes the teaching of the Catholic Church, that out of the true Church there is no salvation. *For this my son,* when he left the Father's house to go to that far country, *was dead* and lost for ever; but now, since he has returned, he is come to life again and is found.

* St. John vi. 52.

CHAPTER V.

THE JOY EVINCED AT THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL.—THE FATHER PLEADS HIS CAUSE BEFORE THE ELDER BROTHER.

"AND they began to be merry." The Father rejoiced in the love and affection of his son. The son rejoiced in the mercy, love, and presence of his good Father. The life of a sincere, pious convert is a life of constant joy and happiness, and there never has been one who joined the Catholic Church, and lived up to her teaching, that ever regretted it. They could daily say with St. Paul: "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." * If there has been one who fell away the second time, it was one who only *conformed* but was not *converted* to the Church; one of those of whom the Apostle St. John says: "They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have remained with us: but that they may be manifest, that they are not all of us." † No Catholic well instructed and living in the constant practice of his holy religion ever *even thinks* of forsaking it for another; he will live and die, if necessary, for his religion, but no threats or promises can make him change. It is for him a source of joy and peace such as earth cannot give nor take away. The sweet unction of the Holy Spirit within him, and the Divine Victim, Jesus Christ, in the Blessed Eucharist, ever present and accessible to him, are treasures of infinite value, to secure the possession of which he is willing to sacrifice all, even life itself, should it be

* Phil. i. 21. † 1 St. John ii. 19.

required. For, as St. John observes: "You have the unction from the Holy One, and know all things" *—that is to say, the true children of God's Church who remain united under the guidance of their lawful pastors partake of the grace of the Holy Ghost promised to the Church and her pastors, and find in the Church all necessary knowledge and instruction, so that they have no need to seek it elsewhere.

Thus far our attention has been chiefly occupied with the younger brother, his revolt, his departure, his dissipation, his misery, his return and reception by the Father. The elder brother has hardly been mentioned; and now, at the close of the parable, we are introduced to him also. As the reception and restoration of the prodigal son to all the rights and privileges of the children of God was an act of infinite mercy and clemency on the part of the Father, and the cause of unusual festivity in the house, as manifested by the heavenly banquet given to all its inmates in honor of the occasion; so we can truly say that this mercy and clemency surpassed all limits when we see the Father himself condescend so far as to plead the cause of the prodigal son before the elder brother, and leave no means untried to effect a reconciliation and re-establish brotherly love and charity between the brothers.

"Now his elder son was in the field, and when he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing." We have already seen, at the beginning of the parable, that the elder brother represents the true and sincere Christian who always remained in the Father's house—that is, never left the true Church.

* 1 St. John ii. 20.

Whilst the younger brother wasted his substance in riotous living, and was by his disobedience reduced to extreme misery and want, the elder persevered faithfully in the house of his Father, under the sway of paternal authority, employing his time according to the wishes of his Father, laboring in the field for the interest of his Father, and, under the roof of the paternal mansion, enjoying the presence and conversation of that good Father; in other words, working and praying, but all in conformity with the Father's will. It was after a day's labor such as we have described that he came from the field as usual, and drew nigh to the house—to the Church—whilst the banquet in honor of the prodigal's return was going on. He "drew nigh to the house, and heard music and dancing."

What Church must it be where there are *music and dancing?* Surely not the church of any of our modern sects, many of whom would not allow music and dancing in their private houses, especially on the Lord's day, for fear of breaking the Sabbath or tarnishing the lustre of their sanctity. Many of them do not consider the church to be a place of spiritual merriment and rejoicing, but rather a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. With them Sunday is not a sunny day, a day of gladness and rest, with suitable recreation, but a Sabbath more rigid than that of the Jews, and more terrible to the little ones than the day whereon Moses received the Commandments amidst thunder and lightning that struck terror into the hearts of all the people.

As the *music and dancing* are going on in the Father's house—the Church, of course—there can be no question of any but of sacred music and sacred danc-

ing; and this, I say, belongs exclusively to the Catholic Church. There is no form of divine worship which gives such inspiration to the artist, and opens such a field for the composer of music to develop and display his talents, as the holy sacrifice of the Mass in the Catholic Church. Not only vocal but instrumental music of every description can find a place at High Mass to chant the praises of God. Wherever she has the means, even at the present day, she carries out to the very letter that invitation of the royal Psalmist: "Praise Him with timbrel and choir: praise Him with strings and organ. Praise Him on high-sounding cymbals: praise Him on cymbals of joy." *

And as to dancing—yes, I admit, when High Mass is celebrated, especially if there are deacon and subdeacon with a host of other assistant clergy, there is a holy movement or sacred dance going on around the altar, which sometimes gives occasion to the unbeliever who may be present to laugh and condemn as superstitious those religious ceremonies of which he has no knowledge whatever; whereas to the intelligent Catholic this sacred dance, far from being a cause of ridicule and contempt, is but another proof that not one jot or tittle of the true manner of worshipping God is neglected or forgotten in the Catholic Church.

That under the ancient testament there was a sacred dance used in the worship of God we learn from the history of King David; for when the ark of the covenant, that most holy sanctuary of the Jews, "was come into the city of David," whither it was brought from Cariathiarim amid music of all kinds

* Ps. cl.

of instruments, David, the king, girded in a linen ephod, danced with all his might in holy exultation before the ark of the Lord, although Michol, his wife, looking through the window, despised him in her heart for doing so.* That David's dance before the ark of the covenant was pleasing to the Lord is seen clearly by the punishment He inflicted on Michol, who mocked at him. "The Lord punished her with barrenness." And so He punishes with spiritual barrenness all those who mock the sacred rites and ceremonies of the Church. These rites and ceremonies of olden times are still proper in the worship of God; if they were good, holy, and approved by Him in the ancient law, they are so still, and have lost nothing of their sacred character. On the contrary, they received more of their significance and holiness in the new law than they had in the old. And if some people do not understand the meaning of all this, they have no right to mock and condemn them before seeking information in the proper place. Otherwise "they blaspheme what they know not." † Let them follow the example of the elder brother, who, when he came and drew nigh to the house, heard music and dancing at such an extraordinary time, and hence "he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant." He did not turn away at once and ask a stranger who was never in the Father's house, nor even the "citizen of that country," who was the sworn enemy of the Father, and who, by calumnies and misrepresentations, sought to draw the children and servants from the house of their Father, as well as to prevent the return of the unhappy prodigals, in

* 2 Kings vi. 16. † Epistle of St. Jude 10.

order to employ them on his own farms; no, "he called one of the servants" of the house, who knew all about it, and consequently was able to give him the proper information. It is appalling indeed to see how fearfully ignorant sectarian churchmen and writers are concerning Catholic doctrine and practices, how much soever knowledge they may possess in other respects. No matter how sincere in their desire to state the truth, or how kindly disposed they may be even towards Catholicity, they cannot write a page or say a sentence or two concerning it where an intelligent Catholic could not point out one or several mistakes—unintentional, perhaps, on the part of the authors, but always unpardonable on the part of those who take upon themselves to instruct others without themselves knowing anything of what they wish to teach. But what can you expect where there is no love for truth, only bigoted malice and prejudice, to govern the tongue or the pen? "Truly such are blind, and leaders of the blind." *

"And he [the servant] said to him: Thy brother is come, and thy Father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe." This servant spoke the truth as he knew it, irrespective of the pleasure or pain it might cause the enquirer. The music and dancing in the Father's house were no mere nonsense; they had their meaning. Everything in the Church of Jesus Christ has its meaning and was ordained for sacred purposes; and to be so it is not necessary that it should be mentioned in the Bible minutely and expressly. We know that Jesus Christ gave St. Peter the power of binding and loosing: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be

* St. Matt. xv. 14.

bound also in heaven." Men are bound by laws and regulations, and St. Peter's laws and regulations have their sanction in heaven. He has full power from the King of heaven to make laws and regulations, according to times and circumstances. Moreover, we are informed that Christ "showed *Himself alive* after His *Passion* by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them and speaking of the kingdom of God" *—which is the Church. Very little is recorded of what He said or taught during these forty days. The holy Fathers unanimously declare that He instructed them during these days on the organism of the Church, the holy sacraments, etc.; as, in fact, there are many things in use in the Catholic Church, and also retained by some ancient sects not Protestant, which date back to apostolic times, and many of these, no doubt, were sanctioned by Christ Himself, although the fact is not expressly mentioned in the Bible. And who will presume to say that all this is nonsense? Christ gave to His Church the dispensation of the holy sacraments; common sense requires that holy things should be treated in a holy manner, and it belongs to the Church to define in what manner and fashion—in other words, under what rites and ceremonies—they are to be administered in order that proper respect be always paid to them. There is nothing superfluous, nothing useless, nothing unreasonable or senseless in the Father's house. Whether it be ordained by the *Father* in person, or by "the faithful and wise steward whom the Lord hath set over His family," or by the tutors whom the Father has placed over the heir while he is yet young, every law, every regulation has a divine

* Acts i. 3.

sanction ; therefore he never can be a dutiful and submissive child who revolts at or scoffs and ridicules what his Father ordains, whom he is bound to respect, cherish, and obey.

The servant speaks the truth. He has nothing to hide, to disguise, to add, or to exaggerate. What a pity that non-Catholics, even when anxious to know the truth, seldom apply to a well-educated Catholic priest for information ! If they consult any Catholic it is usually a poor servant-girl or a laboring-man, both of whom may be instructed well enough to know what they themselves are to believe and to do in order to save their souls, but are not sufficiently instructed to refute objections and cavils of controversy, and who, though very pleasing to God, think as little of enquiring what reasons the Church had to command and teach as Eve in Paradise, before she sinned, thought of knowing what reason God had in prohibiting the eating of the forbidden fruit. When there is question of a point of law the poor unlettered man or woman is not consulted ; a learned and skilful lawyer is sought. In sickness the best physicians are called in. In matters of worldly science they have recourse to men who devote their lives to profound study ; but if they read in the Bible that "the Holy Ghost hath appointed the bishops" * (of the Catholic Church certainly, as there was no other from the beginning) "to rule the Church of God," instead of applying to those rulers appointed by God they turn to outsiders, who are more "citizens of that country"—farmers, politicians, etc.—than clergymen, and who, besides, profess open hostility to the true Church. How, then, can any one expect to

* Acts xx. 28.

learn the truth from such persons? "For," says the inspired writer, "the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth, because he is the Angel of the Lord of Hosts." * If such was the case in the ancient testament, how much more so in the new, where Christ said to His priests: "As the Father hath sent Me, I send you"; † and again: "He that heareth you, heareth Me: he that despiseth you, despiseth Me." ‡

"And the elder brother was angry, and would not go in." Here our Saviour gives a lesson to the faithful members of His Church how they ought to conduct themselves in regard to converts. The conduct of the prodigal before his return was indeed most reprehensible. It was enough not only to excite the just anger of the Father, who let him go and "divided among them the substance," but also of the elder brother and the whole household of God, because the reasons advanced by the younger brother to justify his departure were false and unreasonable, and his conduct afterwards was a disgrace to the whole family; as, in fact, the prevarications and oddities of the sects are attributed by the world to Christianity itself, and many who become disgusted with the sects reject the true Church likewise, thinking it no better. In this the anger of the elder brother against the younger was in some sort justifiable. But the fundamental principles of true Christianity are justice and mercy; and if the elder brother had faithfully practised and cultivated the former, it was also necessary he should have an opportunity of practising the latter, and thus resemble more closely his just and merciful Father.

* Mal. ii. 7. † St. John xx. 21. ‡ Ibid.; St. Luke x. 16.

"His Father began to entreat him." The Father's charity and mercy were not content in granting full pardon to the prodigal, restoring all his rights, and admitting him to the great banquet; He now pleads his cause, and becomes a mediator between him and his elder brother, so that, when God forgives, men should likewise forgive. This entreating on the part of the good Father is certainly the climax of His mercy and goodness. Could He have done more or gone farther?

"And he answering, said to his Father: Behold, for so many years do I serve thee, and I have never transgressed thy commandments, and yet thou hast never given me a kid to make merry with my friends." The joy of the heavenly Father over the return of this prodigal son is so great, and He pours on him so many of those most sweet and sensible consolations and pleasures with which He is wont to fortify and console His servants under the trials of their earthly exile, as to even excite the jealousy of those who never fell away.

Let us here note carefully all the complaints uttered by the elder brother, for they are founded on truth; the Father does not refute or deny them. "Behold, for so many years do I serve thee." The Catholic Church always served her Divine Founder; she never fell away; she never acted like the sects, that served for some time, fell away, and never returned. "And I never transgressed thy commandments." I have always been obedient, as the Apostle testifies when he says: "As the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things."* Had the Catholic Church ever fallen

* Eph. v. 24.

away or proved unfaithful to Christ, then the Apostle would have given the example of an adulteress for Christian married women to imitate; and who will dare to say such was the case? She was always, and will be to the end of time, the faithful spouse of Jesus Christ, He being her head, as the husband is the head of the wife. But not in the sense that she, *a visible body*, has not likewise a visible head of her own. If the Church is the spouse of Christ it is absurd to say that Christ espoused a bride without a head—*a mere trunk*. Hence, as the husband is the head of the wife, so Christ is the head of the Church. But if "Christ is the saviour of His body," and "we are members of His body, of His flesh, of His bones,"* this body was never beheaded, and Christ, being united with the visible head of that body, accounts for all which the Catholic Church attributes to her own visible head. Hence the charge made by the sects in order to justify their apostasy is completely refuted in the plea of the elder brother.

"Yet thou hast never given me a kid to make merry with my friends." Although I have always been faithful and obedient to thee, I have never received half as much sweetness and consolation at any one time as I see you lavish on my unfortunate brother. The meaning of it is this: Almighty God, the consoler and comforter of the afflicted, is accustomed to reward His faithful servants in many ways, even in this life: with interior consolations, special pleasures or comforts in the performance of duty and in overcoming difficulties, which produce a happiness and joy beyond all description, and are not found in any worldly pleasure or amusement. These spiritual

*Eph. v. 23, 30.

sweetnesses are given not so much for a reward as an encouragement. They are given particularly to beginners in the service of God, and to those that are yet weak and feeble in virtue; although man's true destiny in this world is not to enjoy, but to deserve, to suffer, and to merit. Hence it happens that those who advance most rapidly in the service of God and the practice of virtue receive less of those sweet interior consolations, but more and more of the hard bread of tears and sufferings which they endure for the sake of Christ; and this latter treatment is far more profitable than the former. The mistake of the elder brother consisted in this, that he seemed to think that full retribution should be dealt out in this world; whereas the real reason of the Father's different treatment of his sons was for the advantage of both, and the younger brother just returned was yet a novice in the service of God and an infant in virtue, that required to be nourished with sweetness, kindness, and indulgence. But the elder brother, being a veteran and expert in the Father's service, could endure bitter hardships and submit to labor for His sake. The time will come, too, when the elder brother shall receive a just and great reward for his long and faithful service in the Father's house, all the more rich and magnificent since he has never squandered any of the "portion of substance that falleth to him," but invested all his means in the Father's interest—for the greater glory of God. Not for the spiritual or temporal sweetness which man enjoys in this present life shall he receive a reward, but for the labors and sufferings endured in the service of God. These shall purchase an unfading crown of glory.

"But as soon as this thy son is come, who hath devoured his substance with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." As the true Church of Jesus Christ is His spouse, ever subject and faithful to Him, the sects, her rivals, are not spouses. Apostasy from the truth, and heresy, are always considered in Scripture as spiritual adultery; for such are only possible by adulterating the truth. How shameless, then, as well as blasphemous, is the language of those sectarian writers and preachers who, in order to avert the disgrace of adultery from their own sect, endeavor to brand it upon the primitive Church of Christ, and apply the name given by the inspired Apostle to pagan Rome, when it was the centre and mistress of paganism, to Christian Rome, the centre and mistress of all true Christian communities! Let them only examine the text before us; the word "harlots" stands there in the plural number. That settles the question, for every child knows there is but one holy Catholic Church, which has the centre of its unity in Rome; but there are scores of sectarian churches, mostly all of them without visible heads, which are sects because they have adulterated the *word of God* and did "not remain in the doctrine of Christ." *

"But he said to him: Son, thou art always with me, and all I have is thine." What could be said or thought more favorably in defence of the Catholic Church than these words of the Father: "My son, thou art always with Me"? Not only for a few years or centuries, but *always;* therefore even before thy younger brother left the house, when he returned, and ever after. Thou art always with Me, because "I

*2 St. John 9.

am always with you, all days, even to the consummation of the world." Neither is this continual presence of the Father an idle presence: "Behold, all I have is thine." Thou art mine, and I and "all I have is thine." "He that continueth in the doctrine of Christ, the same hath both the Father and the Son." * What a difference, therefore, between the elder brother, who remained always faithful in the Father's house, and the prodigal, away from his Father! No wonder the latter said on returning to himself: "I am not worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." Yes, "I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners." † In other words, it is infinitely preferable to occupy the last position in the true Church of Christ than the first in any of the sects; and, again, the Father gives the reason for the rejoicing in the house, and the difference that existed between the two brothers, the one within, the other outside, the Church of Christ.

"But it was fit that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead and is come to life again: he was lost and is found." Here is a plain answer for those who deny the Catholic doctrine that out of the true Church there is no salvation. *This thy brother,* when away from the Father's house, whether living riotously or feeding swine on the farm of the *citizen of that far country*—this thy brother was dead; but now, when he has returned in grief and sorrow, humble and submissive, he is come to life again. Away from the Father's house, outside of the true Church, *he was lost*—lost to heaven, lost to the Church of Christ on earth, and

* 2 St. John 9. † Ps. lxxxiii. 11.

oh ! lost to himself, lost for ever. But now, after the recantation of his errors, after his sincere and contrite confession, I have clothed him anew with the "first robe" of sanctifying grace through the ministry of My priest; the ring of unchanging fidelity to My laws glitters on his hand, and the shoes of good counsel on his feet render him ready and determined to tread the narrow way that leads to life and salvation; therefore *he is found.* He is found, to fall away no more for all eternity; for he "has chosen to be an abject in the house of God [the true Church of Jesus Christ] rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners." Amen.

SECTION XI.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

"And Jesus spoke again to them in parables, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited: Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come ye to the marriage. But they neglected, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. And the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously put them to death. But when the king had heard of it, he was angry, and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he saith to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready: but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways; and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good: and the marriage was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests: and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen."—St. Matt. xxii. 1–14.

CHAPTER I.

THE UNION OF CHRIST WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, HIS SPOUSE, AND THE INDISSOLUBILITY OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE.

WE shall see, as we consider this parable, that it is the will of God that all men should come to the knowledge of His divine revealed truth, and partake of the fruits of redemption deposited for all in the holy Catholic Church. We shall also see that God and His Church on earth neglect nothing to save all, and in what manner the generality of men answer the summons of God and His Church, and what obstacles they themselves throw in the way of their salvation.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son." Once more I will draw the reader's attention to the fact that our Saviour points out in all these parables the monarchical form of government in His Church—"the kingdom of heaven" on earth, which is only proper and characteristic of the Catholic Church. That the *kingdom of heaven* mentioned here is not the kingdom of God's glory in heaven is evident, for our Lord does not call it the kingdom *in* heaven, but *of* heaven. It was established by God on earth for heaven. Moreover, in the kingdom of glory there is no one found without the *nuptial garment*, as is represented in the parable; but he may be found in the kingdom of Christ on earth, where there can exist good and bad subjects, good and bad Christians.

The "king who made a marriage for his son"

is no other than God the Father Himself, the first Person of the Blessed Trinity. The incarnation of the Son of God, the hypostatic union of His divine nature with our human nature, and the subsequent reunion of fallen human nature with God through our union with Christ in His one holy, true Church, is a continuous marriage feast. Christ is the bridegroom, the Church is the spouse. As the Divine Word never will be separated from the human nature which He once assumed, so also He is wedded to His Church, never to be separated from her, being one with her not only by the grace of His Divine Spirit, by which we are "made partakers of His divine nature," but also through the adorable sacrament of His Body and Blood in the Eucharist, by which this marriage is consummated; and every member of the Church partaking of it becomes also one flesh with Him—"flesh of His flesh, bone of His bones." * As in marriage "a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh," † so also every convert to the Church of Jesus Christ has to love Jesus Christ more than father, mother, brothers, or sisters, or anything else which he may possess in this world, and *cleave* to Him, and, nourished with His sacred Body and Blood, shall live by Him. "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life everlasting in you." ‡ This indissoluble tie between Christ and His Church is so perfect that St. Paul places it before us as the model of Christian marriage: "The husband," he says, "is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church. He is the saviour of His body. Therefore as the Church is

* Eph. v. 30. † Gen. ii. 24. ‡ St. John vi. 54.

subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it: that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life. That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man hateth his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church: because we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular love his wife as himself; and let the wife fear her husband." * I have quoted this passage at length for the special benefit and consideration of well-meaning and sincere Protestants, because it demolishes Protestantism in more than one respect.

Protestantism does not believe in the indissolubility of the Christian marriage-tie. It grants divorces, and allows the parties divorced to contract a second marriage whilst the other party is still living. All this is natural to it, for, in order to justify its own apostasy, it maintains the monstrous assertion that even the primitive Church of Jesus Christ did not remain faithful to her Divine Spouse nor continue *always subject to Christ*, and that Christ divorced Himself from her, and after a thousand years

* Eph. v. 23-33.

espoused a new church, or rather as many spouses as there are Protestant sects, each claiming to be the true Church of Jesus Christ. And Protestantism asserts that they are all good, that one church is as good as another—an assertion which, if true, would establish Mormonism and make Jesus Christ a greater Mormon than Joe Smith or Brigham Young! If Jesus Christ had really abandoned his Church at any period of her existence, and, after a certain number of years, espoused another one, Protestantism would then be justified in granting a divorce from the matrimonial tie, and permitting the parties to marry again during the lifetime of each other—by the example of Christ, but not by His word; for He has said: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another [a thing of frequent occurrence amongst Protestants] committeth adultery against her; and if the wife shall put away her husband and be married to another [a case of no less frequent occurrence among Protestants than the former], she committeth adultery."* But what if the Apostle sets up the Church as an example for Christian married women, and this Church, as Protestantism accuses her, has been faithless to her Divine Spouse, would it not follow that the Apostle of Jesus Christ in the above-quoted passage has set up the example of an adulteress for Christian married women to follow? Only believe with all true Catholics that Christ has never for an instant abandoned the Church He once espoused (and this Church is the one holy Catholic Church, for from the beginning there was no other), and that the Church was always *subject to Christ* and loved by Him *as His own*

* St. Mark x. 11, 12.

body, and the sanctity and indissolubility of the matrimonial tie will stand as firm and glorious as ever. "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder."*

The union of Christ and His Church was the work of God, for the "king made a marriage for his son"; and as Christian marriage represents the union of Christ with His Church, "it is a great sacrament," not in the civil order, as a mere natural contract, but "*in Christ and in the Church*"—therefore in the supernatural order, as firm, indestructible, and sacred as baptism once validly conferred.† Protest-

* St. Matt. xix. 6.

† Luther, in his sermon on Matrimony (tom. i. fol. 170b), compares this sacrament to holy baptism, and also to the union that exists between Christ and His Church. He speaks as follows: "Gleich wie das Wasser der Tauff, wenn das der Priester über das Kind geusst, bedeutet die heilig, Göttlich und ewige Gnad, die dann eben wird gossen in die Seel und Leib desselben Kinds, und reinigt aus die Erbsünd; dasz da Gottes Reich immer seie; welche Ding unaussprechliche Güter sind, und gar viel unermeszlich grószer, dann das Wasser, das dieselben bedeutete. So ist auch der Ehelich Stand ein Sakrament, ein äusserlich heiliges Zeichen, des allergrószten, heiligsten, würdigsten, edlen Dings, das noch nie gewesen noch werden mag, das ist, die Vereinigung Göttlicher und Menschlicher Natur in Christo. Dan der heilige Apostel Paulus sagt: Wie der Man und Weib vereinigt im Ehelichen Stand, sind zwei in einem Fleisch, also ist Gott und die Menschheit ein Christus: Christus auch und die Christenheit ein Leib. Das ist fürwahr (spricht er) ein groszes Sakrament, das ist: der Eheliche Stand bedeut fürwahr grosze Ding. Ist das nicht grosze Ding, dasz Gott Mensch ist, dasz Gott sich dem Menschen zu eigen gibt, und will sein seyn; gleich wie der Mann sich dem Weibe gibt, und sein ist?" (As the waters of baptism which the priest pours upon the infant signify the holy, divine, and eternal grace which is then poured into the soul and body of the same child, cleansing it from original sin, that the kingdom of God may exist always, which things are ineffable blessings and infinitely greater than the water which signifies them; so also the married state is a sacrament, an exterior holy sign of the greatest, most holy, most worthy, noble thing that ever yet has been, or ever can be—that is, the union of the divine and human nature in Christ. For the holy Apostle St. Paul says: As man and wife united in marriage are two in one flesh, so also God and human nature are one Christ, and Christ and Christianity one body. This is truly, says the same Apostle, a great sacrament—that is, the matrimonial state—for it signifies a great thing indeed. Is it not a great

antism, which is the work of man, separates Christ from His Church, in order to place itself in her stead. No wonder, then, that it grants divorce and allows "men to put asunder what God hath joined together."

Now, if the marriage which the great *King* of heaven and earth *made for His Son* is the union of Christ with His Church, then this Church is the lawful spouse of Christ, whom He loves and cherishes as *His own body.* And as there can be no doubt of the truth of this fact, what will, I do not say Catholics or Protestants—but what will Christ Himself say of those who, in order to justify their own apostasy from the Church *of the living God,* accuse that Church, the spouse of Christ, of apostasy from Christ, and lay to her charge the very crimes they themselves have committed? If you calumniate the wife, you calumniate the husband. If you attack the character of the bride, you attack that of the bridegroom. If you calumniate or insult the Church in any way whatever, you do so likewise to Christ Himself; for the Church is the spouse of Christ, and Christ loves her *as His own body.* "He is the sa-

and wonderful thing that God is man, and that God gives himself to man and wants to be his own, even as the husband gives himself to his wife and is owned by her?) Again, in the year 1528 (tom. iv., Jen., fol. 134a) Luther speaks as follows in his sermon on Gen. xxiv.: "Nu ist Abraham da; das ist: Gott bestellt ihm ein Weib, und lasset es aus einem anderen Land holen, das ist, dasz, Paulus, Ephs. v., sagt: Seine Braut heisset die Katholische Kirche. Dann der eheliche Stand ist ein Sakrament, und geistliche Deutung Christi und seiner Christenheit, dasz wir allesammbt ein Leib mit Christo sind." (It is the same with Abraham. God preordains a wife for him, and orders her to be brought from another country. This is the reason why St. Paul, in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, calls the Catholic Church the spouse of Christ. For the state of matrimony is a sacrament, and in a spiritual sense signifies Christ and Christianity, and that we are altogether one body with Christ.)

viour of His body,"* and will never permit this His spouse, His body, to be slandered, calumniated, or oppressed without raising His arm to defend and protect her. "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me,"† says our Saviour in St. Luke. And we read in the Acts of the Apostles that when Saul (afterwards St. Paul) persecuted the Church, and was on his way to the city of Damascus, breathing slaughter against the Christians, the Lord Jesus appeared to him on his journey; and Saul, seeing the apparition, fell from his horse, humbled and confused, and as he lay prostrate on the earth Christ spoke and said to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" He does not say, Why do you persecute the Church? but Me; and to clear up every doubt on the subject He presently adds: "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest."‡

Let Protestants stop here and reflect a moment, particularly those that are really sincere and pious. Let them read and tremble; for as the Catholic Church, originally espoused by Jesus Christ, is still the same, ever nourished and cherished by Him as *His own flesh*, *His own body*, because always *subject* to Him, so He still considers every thought, word, or deed against her not so much as directed against her as against Himself; and let such good people remember that, no matter how sincere and pious they may be, they stand before Christ in the same attitude as those pious Jews of old did who, misled by bigoted Scribes and Pharisees and a degenerate Jewish priesthood, stood among the crowd before the house of Pontius Pilate and joined in the cry of their

* Eph. v. 23. † St. Luke x. 16.

‡ Acts ix. 4.

leaders, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!"* They are not Pauls, who *preach Christ, and Him crucified;* but they are *Sauls,* who persecute Christ whilst they protest against and persecute His Church. Christ and His Church are one. All His interests are centred in her, and all her interests in Him. He imparts to her that wonderful fecundity which in all ages forms the characteristic of her identity and truthfulness. For "the law of the Lord is immaculate, converting souls,"† and she bears Him numberless children, "who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."‡ She, being the queen, obtains from Him and through Him all her power, sanctity, and beauty. No wonder that He says to her: "He that heareth you, heareth Me; he that despiseth you, despiseth Me"; and again: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."§ No sect or schism would be possible if their founders and partisans had not lost the true idea of the character and authority of the spouse of Jesus Christ—His holy Catholic Church.

CHAPTER II.

HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO SEEK THE TRUTH AND FOLLOW IT—THE GREATER NUMBER OF MEN ARE LOST BECAUSE THEY DO NOT SERIOUSLY THINK OF THIS MATTER.

"AND he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not

* St. John xix. 6.
† Ps. xviii. 8.
‡ St. John i. 13.
§ St. Matt. xviii. 17.

come." The guests invited to this marriage are all mankind, without exception. They were all created by God and destined for the same end—eternal beatitude. After the fall of our first parents all were invited to come to the marriage to partake of the benefits of redemption. Almighty God has a thousand ways of inviting men to this marriage, this reunion of fallen man with his great Creator; for, as the Apostle St. John tells us, "He enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world," * whether through His ministers or by particular graces or inspirations which, if followed and complied with, infallibly lead the soul to the full knowledge of revealed truth. He invites all to the marriage; but, alas! they do not heed the invitation, for the Gospel says "they would not come." Such was the case in the old law, with the Jews in particular, to whom Almighty God sent successively many prophets, and lastly His own Son, but the majority of them refused to come. "Again he sent out other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited: Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come ye to the marriage." In these servants we cannot but acknowledge the Apostles and disciples of Christ, as well as their successors. In all ages since the time of Christ servants are constantly sent out to invite to the marriage feast; for the apostolic mission of holy Church has no other object in view than "to gather together in one the children of God that were dispersed"; † to assemble them in the same nuptial hall, around the same holy table which the Divine *Wisdom hath spread for them.* ‡ Here the beeves and fatlings are killed and all things are

* St. John i. 9. † Ibid. xi. 52. ‡ Prov. ix. 2

ready. Yes, Christ, the only-begotten Son of the Father and the first-born among many brethren, is sacrificed; thousands and millions of holy martyrs have died for the faith of the Catholic Church, and left a treasure of merits, represented here by the "dinner." All that is necessary to effect the happy union of Christ with His Church and all the members thereof, all that is conducive to sweeten and strengthen this holy union—all is ready, is always prepared; from the time of Christ the table is set in His holy Church; nothing is wanting except those who are invited.

We read in the Old Testament, in the Book of Esther, that King Assuerus made a feast which lasted a hundred and fourscore days, and everything there was worthy of a king's magnificence. But the marriage feast which Christ established shall endure till the end of time—a very long period to our minds, and yet not a day, if compared to the endless eternity that follows. For, as St. Peter says: "But of this one thing be not ignorant, my beloved, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." * And during that whole day the servants of the Lord are busy, some arranging the tables and attending to the guests, others going about inviting to the marriage: "Wisdom hath built herself a house, she hath hewn her out seven pillars. She hath slain her victims, mingled her wine, and set forth her table." †

If what sectarians assert concerning the true Church were a fact—that is, that she was invisible for a thousand years up to the time of the so-called Reformation—then all who were invited during that

* 2 St. Peter iii. 8. † Prov. ix. 1, 2.

period had a great excuse for not heeding the invitation; for to do otherwise would be impossible, since they could not have known where to go. If the true Church of God existed but was invisible, nobody could know of its existence, nor testify that it was existing or where. The marriage feast begun with such expense and preparation would have been broken up and adjourned for a thousand years, in order to give place to Martin Luther and his quarrelsome disciples, who opened another style of marriage feast, *not in Christ and in the Church,* but in the flesh, only despoiling the matrimonial tie of the spiritual character of a sacrament and debasing it to the rank of a mere civil contract. At the marriage feast of the Son of God "all things are ready"; but here nothing is ready; every guest is merely shown the Bible and told to prepare his own supper—that is, to make his own creed, his own religion; and whatever he makes of it, provided he be sincere, it is just as good as if prepared by the great King Himself. Now, how does such doctrine agree with our parable? It is impossible to discover the least resemblance.

Although all men are invited to this marriage feast, yet all do not obey the summons; for the Gospel tells us "they neglected, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise." They neglected the invitation which would secure for them the right and title to an eternal kingdom. It is this frightful neglect in the most important of all affairs which causes the condemnation of the greater part of mankind. Men hear the call, receive the invitation, but heed it not. "They neglect and go their ways"—the ways they were accustomed to go, notwithstanding that the Lord assures them,

"Your ways are not My ways, neither are My thoughts your thoughts." * Why do the sects differ from each other, if not because each one has his own way of thinking, and each one's ideas are different from another's? Who, then, can maintain that their ways are the ways of God, and their thoughts the thoughts of God?

Protestantism, which has caused all these sects, endeavors nowadays to lull sore consciences asleep by the assertion that no particular creed is required for salvation, and that every one will be saved in his own sect, provided he believes honestly that it has the truth and its way is the right way. Now, there is as much sense and truth in such an assertion as there is in telling a traveller booked for California that any train or boat he sees, no matter if bound for the British Isles or any other part of the world, will bring him to his destination if he takes passage on it and believes honestly that it will lead him there; or as if, one part of an army being in open revolt against its general and other superior officers, you tell the disloyal soldiers that their conduct will be just as pleasing to the king as that of the faithful soldiers, who allow themselves to be directed by their general and other officers, provided that they believe that such conduct is pleasing to the king.

Again, you might as well say that all those who persecuted the Church of Christ and put to death His Apostles committed no crime, because they honestly believed they were *rendering a service to God!* It is true, there may be less blame attached to one who has been born and educated in the religion of some sect than if he were to revolt openly against

* Isaias lv. 8.

the true Church of Christ; but it is likewise true that there is a serious blame attached to the neglect and carelessness which paralyze and prevent him from making the necessary enquiries after truth, especially when good sense and the grace of God have been operating in his mind, raising up doubts and serious suspicions that everything taught by the sect to which he adheres is not correct.

It is true that if the Catholic Church teaches that outside of her pale, without the marriage feast of the parable, there is no salvation, she also teaches that, as there is but "*one* baptism," those who, truly baptized in any sect, sincerely desire to follow the truth in good faith, and never have sinned against faith, still belong to the Catholic Church. But how few there are among the sects who are not guilty of their errors! I do not mean to say that there are many who actually know and are aware that it is their duty to return to the Catholic Church as the only true Church of Jesus Christ, and neglect doing so; but the greater number of those who *neglect to come* are those who are so much attached to going their own way, no matter what way it may be or where it may lead, that they do not take the time or the trouble to enquire seriously, Is this the way that will lead me to life everlasting? Am I on the safe path? Is there no possibility of a mistake? Hence they neglect and go their way. The affairs of the immortal soul are considered by them as a mere secondary matter. The universally-attested fact that God has given a law for all men without exception should of itself be sufficient to attract and engage the serious attention of every man, and to lead him to enquire, What is this law? Where shall I find it? It is

God who commands me, and sound reason dictates that I should obey Him before any one else. If I live in a country I must obey the laws of that country; and if I transgress the laws and live without caring to know what is right and what is wrong, merely because such is my will and pleasure, and I find it too troublesome to enquire concerning the laws, will my ignorance in this case excuse me, particularly when there are authorities at hand to expound and enforce the laws?

Neither am I excused by the fact that there are many false religions and counterfeit churches. This is precisely the reason that should stimulate me to seek and find out the truth, and cause me to be very careful in this respect. When there are counterfeit bank-notes in circulation people are very careful that they may not be deceived and receive false money for good; and no one would excuse the man who had much to do with money matters and neglected to find out how a counterfeit note could be distinguished from one that was genuine, receiving all that were offered him without taking the trouble to discover whether they were good or bad. It is the same in matters of religion; the endeavor to find out the truth would require more time and application than those persons are accustomed to bestow on their spiritual affairs. They have been members of this or that denomination so long a time, and would not like to change. So far they have gone on easy enough; what they know of the law of God is already more than sufficient—sometimes more than they are willing to obey; so they think there is no use in enquiring after other obligations. Religious controversy is always unpleasant; there is sometimes

too much animosity on both sides, one detesting the reputed errors of the other, perhaps even detesting the persons who broach these errors. And thus men are too fond of peace to wage war even against the devil. They advocate a kind of charity which would not say a word for fear of giving offence, even though thousands and millions go to perdition. And when they come in contact with a man not governed by human respect, one noble enough to speak the truth and call things by their proper names — consequently differently from what they have been accustomed to call them—"they neglect and go their ways."

Oh! what frightful misery follows this neglect of God's invitation, and how few there are not guilty of it. And still it is God that invites; it is God that calls them to be united to His only-begotten Son in His holy Church, to the everlasting marriage feast which begins on earth and shall continue in heaven for all eternity.

"They neglected," as the Scripture says, "and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise." They had too much to do with their temporal affairs to pay attention to the invitations of God. Some have brought forward an objection that if the Catholic religion were carried out generally and to its full perfection, commerce and other temporal concerns would suffer; men would be too spiritual and give too much time to preparation for the next life, and so neglect their temporal prosperity. But what of this? Would men be less happy if they "sought before all the kingdom of God and His justice"?* Would not "the rest be given" to them?

* St. Matt. vi. 33.

If, indeed, sectarianism is more favorable to temporal gain, is it not evident that with the sects man is more exposed to neglect the call of divine grace and go his own way rather than the way of God? And which should a rational being prefer, to gain the riches of earth and lose heaven, or gain heaven, which he shall enjoy eternally, and have less of earthly goods, which are of little value, since, whether we will it or not, we shall leave them all some day?

I am not astonished to see sectarian countries possess more of this world's wealth than good Catholic countries, for it is rather a fact that testifies in favor of the Catholic Church than otherwise. The Scripture condemns riches in many places, and our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, when He came on earth, chose the state of poverty and suffering in preference to riches, and counsels all who desire a life of perfection to "sell what they have and give to the poor." And, again, we see that rich men are but too often the poorest Christians; hence among Catholics poverty is considered a proof of the truthfulness of their Church rather than an objection against it. "The poor have the Gospel preached to them." * Let the rich sectarian read: "The poor you have always with you." † "Woe to you that are rich, because you have your consolations!" ‡ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." § "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." ‖ "They that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snares of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires which

* St. Luke vii. 22. † St. Matt. xxvi. 11. ‡ St. Luke vi. 24.
§ St. Matt. v. 3. ‖ St. Luke xviii. 25.

drown men into destruction and perdition." * If, then, the poverty of Christ, which has always been and is still considered a virtue in the Catholic Church, is condemned and proscribed among the sects, is it not evident, from the texts above quoted, that the characteristic and true spirit of Jesus Christ is with the Catholic Church, and that the more the sects are estranged from the Church the more they go after the riches and comforts of this life? If even in the true Church "they that will become rich fall into temptation and the snares of the devil," etc., how much more out of it, especially when flattering themselves that it is enough for them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as they say—or, in other words, to say, "Lord, Lord," no matter what religion they profess or how they live!

All those who were invited acknowledged Him as their King, but did not obey Him. Yes, even though the King insists, and continues to send servants to invite them to the marriage, what do they do? "And the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death." It is not the servants of the good King that thus ill-treated "the rest" of them that were invited, but they themselves were ill-treated by those they were sent to invite. Open the pages of history, and you will see that not only Jews and pagans persecuted and put to death the servants of the great King—that is, the ministers of the true Church—but every heresy and every sect, as soon as it attained a foothold, was always aggressive. As long as they were in the minority they complained about oppression, and confined their attacks to reviling and slan-

* 1 Tim. vi. 9.

dering the Church and her ministers, holding her responsible for every scandal that occurred within her fold which she herself condemned and deplored but could not prevent; but once sufficiently strong in numbers, they resorted to violence, seizing churches and church property founded by Catholics for Catholic purposes, forcing the Catholic population, if strong enough, to self-defence in order to protect their lives and property. No wonder, then, that Catholic sovereigns and commonwealths, which from the time of their conversion to Christianity had adopted the Christian law as the *common law of the land,* even in the civil order, passed stringent laws against the founders of heresies and their abettors, and inflicted the severest penalties on them, not only as rebels against the law of God, but also as rebels and felons against the supreme law of the land and as disturbers of the public peace. In those days the state did not consider itself atheistical but Christian; it knew of no Christianity which was not Catholic, and also knew that what was Catholic was true and sacred, and whatever opposed Catholicity was false, wicked, and heretical, and that heresy was a crime against the state as well as against God. Even then, however, as long as a dissenter kept his opinions to himself and made no efforts to spread them he was not molested; but as soon as he commenced to sound the tocsin of rebellion against the Church as well as against the state, and strove to *draw disciples after him,* he was at once marked out as a wolf in sheep's clothing, and pursued as an enemy of the peace in Church and state. The Church and state united their efforts to guard and defend those who had already followed the summons of the great King and

entered the hall of the marriage feast. Like faithful stewards and sentinels, they kept a watchful eye over the guests, that no mischievous outsiders should molest them, nor any domestic or secret enemy of the King's Son disturb their peace, as the one who entered without the wedding garment. This opposition to sectarianism and unbelief on the part of the true Church is but the natural consequence of the *Spirit of truth* ever abiding with her, the infallible teacher appointed by Jesus Christ, who gave her not only the dead letter of the written word of God, but also the spirit and true meaning of it, that she might *teach all nations.*

There is an immense difference between the Catholic Church and her rivals, the sects. The Catholic Church repeats with every doctrine she proposes to our belief the words of the Divine Saviour Himself: "My doctrine is not Mine but His that sent Me." * Not so with the founder of a sect; he must say: "My doctrine is my own, even if couched in the words of Scripture; no one before me ever took it in this sense, and that it is to be taken in such a sense is my own doctrine." Those who follow him may say: "My doctrine is not my own," while they cannot add, "but God the Father's, who hath sent me." They must say instead: It is Martin Luther's, Calvin's, Wesley's, or whoever he be that formed the sect to which they belong.

It is remarkable what a powerful weapon these so-called Reformers found in reviling not only the Catholic Church, which they hated in common, but also each other. If you believe what Martin Luther says in his private correspondence, then Calvin is in

* St. John vii. 16.

hell; and if you prefer to believe Calvin, his sincere conviction is that Luther is in hell. It is also a well-known fact that Luther, in his invectives against the Pope and the Catholic hierarchy, has enriched the German language with at least a hundred abusive words of his own fabrication; while there is not an abusive word in the ancient classics which Calvin, who wrote in Latin, has not preserved to posterity in his writings against the Catholic Church. The farther they advanced on the road of "reformation" the more abusive their language became. And we regret to see, even in our own age of refinement, that their disciples are not behind their masters in this respect. The best Protestant writers, who aim at purity of language and elegance of style, do not disdain to use the words "Popery," "Papistical," "Popish," "Romanist," "Romish," etc., although they are abusive and not even correct English. They are afraid of losing their Protestant *caste* and approaching too near the Catholic truth, if they call Catholic things by their proper Catholic names. Truth has no need of reviling and misrepresenting her adversaries. She has but to show herself, in her own heavenly beauty and majesty, to those who seek and love her, and all misconceptions and misrepresentations vanish as smoke, and are dissolved by the brightness of her presence as the snow-flake before the meridian sun. And I am quite convinced that if the Catholic truth was represented to the American people as it really is there would in a short time be very few Protestants in the country. No doubt there would be some, who "love darkness better than light," * who would shut their eyes, as the

* St. John iii. 19.

Pharisees of old did, that they might not see. When the rocks burst asunder, when the orb of light hid itself and mourned in darkness the awful scene of Calvary, when the dead came forth from the dreamless slumber of the tomb and the veil of the temple was torn in two, still the obstinate Pharisees shook their heads and said, "An impostor"!

Alas! the vast majority of our honest-minded American people only know the Catholic Church from hearsay; from the misrepresentations and calumnies heaped upon her during the last three centuries; and they neglect taking the trouble and time to examine the other side of the question. As the well-meaning and simple Jews were misled by bigoted Pharisees and doctors of the law, who searched the Scriptures, thinking by this means alone to find life everlasting, and yet could not see that these Scriptures gave testimony to Jesus Christ, the living interpreter of the law, so our non-Catholic American friends are misled and made to think that they believe and practise what the Bible teaches; whereas, in reality, they believe in the word of their preachers and of the founders of their sect rather than in the words of Jesus Christ recorded in the Bible. Any well-instructed Catholic can show them, by the very words of the Bible which they profess to understand and obey, that it is the Catholic Church alone, "the pillar and ground of truth,"* that rightly understands and obeys the Bible, and that in this Church we are to believe according to the Apostles' Creed as firmly as we believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

"But when the king heard of it," as he necessa-

* 1 Tim. iii. 15.

rily hears all things, "he was angry"; and, indeed, he had reason to be so, for inculpable or invincible ignorance may excuse a person, but neglect, wilful error, calumny, and slander never. No matter how much persons may be opposed to each other in their religious views and ideas, the commandment of God, which says "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," comprises all, even our most bitter, enemies, whom we may fight with the fair weapons of truth and justice, but never with misrepresentations, lies, and calumnies.*

CHAPTER III.

IT IS NOT SUFFICIENT FOR SALVATION TO BE NOMINALLY MEMBERS OF THE TRUE CHURCH—REASONS WHY MANY ARE CALLED BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN.

"AND sending his armies he destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city." This punishment was literally fulfilled with respect to the Jews, who were the first to oppose Jesus Christ and His holy Church; but it will be spiritually fulfilled with respect to all those who oppress the Church of God.

* Luther in his writings passes sentence on himself (tom. i., Jena, fol. 423a): "Wer nu einmahl leugt, der ist gewiszlich nicht aus Gott, und verdächtig in allen Dingen." And in fol. 868b he says: "Wan ich einmahl so gelogen, und so grob genärrt erfunden würde, so wäre alle meine Lehr und Ehr, Glaub und Treu gantz aus. Jedermann würde mich für einen Buben, und ehrlosen Bösewicht (wie billig) halten." (Whoever is guilty of one lie is certainly not of God, and suspected in all other matters. Again he writes: "If I had been so grossly foolish as to lie once, it would be all over with my doctrine and honor, faith and fidelity. Every one [as it is becoming] would hold me for a scoundrel and dishonest knave.")

Our Lord calls them "murderers," because they kill souls by depriving them of the spiritual life of grace, and whatever city they build to themselves in opposition to the city of God—the true Church of Christ, built on a high mountain; for, as the Psalmist observes: "The foundations thereof are in the holy mountains" *—that city shall be burnt, and "they themselves shall have their part with the unbelievers." †

"Then the king said to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready, but they that were invited were not worthy." Mark well these words, "The marriage indeed is ready"; all is prepared, the means to "have eternal life, and to have it more abundantly," ‡ are always at hand in the King's banquet-hall, the Church; but "they that were invited were not worthy." They neglected, they despised; they went their own ways, and would not even take the trouble to come and see what was prepared for them. No wonder that "they were not worthy." "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find call to the marriage." When the Jews refused to answer the invitation of God He sent His Apostles to the Gentiles, and they obeyed the summons and were admitted to the marriage-feast. If we cast a glance over the history of the Church we find a remarkable fact: that whenever some great heresy or schism arose, carrying off many of her wayward and unfaithful children, Almighty God made up for the loss by the conversion of other nations in some other part of the world; thus the crown and the right to a heavenly inheritance which they forfeited were awarded to another. Even

* Ps. lxxxvi. 1. † St. Luke xii. 46. ‡ St. John x. 10.

after the so-called Reformation of the sixteenth century, in which the Church of God lost so many millions of her children in Europe, her banquet-hall was immediately filled by other nations that joyfully accepted the light of the true faith in Asia, Africa, and America; so much so that at the end of the last century, according to authentic statistics, there was found an increase of two-thirds of the number which she contained before the Reformation. "The law of the Lord is immaculate, converting souls." *

"And," we are told, "his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both good and bad." Behold another refutation of heresy, which maintains that the true Church of God should comprise none but good men—the elect of God! As long as the true Church lasts on earth —and it will exist there till the end of time—it shall consist of *good and bad* men; "and the marriage was filled with guests." Such is the state of the Church from first to last. Men are continually invited; those who answer the call enter the Church, and will continue to do so until "the marriage is filled with guests"—that is to say, until the number of those fit to be chosen is complete; then comes the end of the world.

"And the king went in to see the guests." On the terrible day of the last and general judgment the mighty King Himself will come in great power and majesty to see every one in particular as he really is, and not as he feigns to be. Then shall the secrets of hearts be revealed to the assembled universe, and the brightness of His coming discover the folly of misspent lives.

* Ps. xviii. 8.

"And he saw a man who had not on a wedding garment." By this wedding garment is signified the sanctifying grace of God, which, in the parable of the prodigal son, was represented by the "first robe." Our Saviour here teaches us that in order to appear agreeable in His eyes at this marriage feast of His Church, we must be clothed in the garment of sanctification by means of the holy sacraments which we receive through His priests of the true Church, after we have laid aside the filthy rags of iniquity which we wore while erring on the highways and byways of sin; and, therefore, that it avails us nothing to have listened to the summons and come to the marriage—yea, even to have entered the hall and been among the guests—in other words, it will avail us nothing to be members of the true Church, if we are not faithful, worthy members, and live in the state of sanctity which is endowed with the sanctifying grace of God.

"And the king said to him: Friend, how camest thou hither not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent." If what Calvin teaches were true, that every man is preordained by God either for salvation or final perdition, independently of his good or bad actions, then the king in the parable had no need of asking such a question, nor the man to be silent and confounded. For if God preordains everything which He foresees, and is Himself the origin of the event, then the man could have replied: "It is thou, O great king! that hast brought me here in this condition in which thou seest me. Thou hast foreseen that I would come here, and I could not avoid coming. Thou hast foreseen and preordained that I should be without a wedding garment at the

time of Thy arrival. I could not help it. I never received it from Thee, and had no means to procure it. But if, notwithstanding Thy divine foresight, I am the author of my own actions, so that if I would omit the act Thou wouldst never foresee it, then, O Lord! I must confess that I came here as an intruder, unfit and unworthy to be found amongst the guests. I might have obtained the "wedding garment" from the ministers of Thy house, who are the "dispensers of the mysteries of God." * These mysteries, Thy sacraments, I could have obtained from the priests of the new law, successors to the Apostles, to whom Jesus Christ gave the power of binding and loosing, of forgiving sins and retaining them. Even if I was a sinner and wore the garment of iniquity I could have washed it in the Blood of the Lamb, and obtained pardon and grace through the ministry of those to whom Thou hast "given the ministry of reconciliation," † who would have restored to me, at any time I had chosen, this wedding garment which alone gives access to the nuptials of the Lamb. I found everything ready for the marriage; but, alas! I neglected, I disregarded. Even in the house of God I have done evil, and wanted to go my own ways, though they were not the ways of God. I have no excuse to make, O great King! nothing to plead in my favor. I have forfeited Thy friendship, forfeited my place amongst the blessed inhabitants of heaven; I am lost, lost for ever, through my own fault! I see all the worthy guests present clothed in the same wedding garment, the same grace of faith, hope, and charity. They all think and will the self-same things; I alone differ. I may have faith, I may

* 1 Cor. iv. 1. † 2 Cor. v. 18.

have hope, but I have not charity; perhaps I have lost all the three divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity. I stand here covered with the garment of iniquity; how can I remain here or be considered worthy to stand an instant in this august and holy assembly? Thus would he speak who is found without the "wedding garment"; but in presence of the truth so plainly set before him he *must* be silent.

"Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet"—the hands that worked iniquity, even in the house of God, and the feet that went their own ways without paying attention to my direction—"and cast him into exterior darkness." Up to this time he lived in the house of God, surrounded by lights and graces; the halls of the marriage feast were sufficiently illuminated for him to see how unbecoming it was that he, a child of God, a guest of the great King, should appear in such an assembly without a wedding garment—alas! even clad in the disgusting garment of sin. But, though he was externally surrounded by light, his whole interior was filled with darkness which would admit of no light; he loved darkness rather than light; now "cast him into exterior darkness." Oh! what a change will be wrought in and about him when that last dread sentence of the great King is passed upon him. His interior darkness shall be changed into interior light, for he shall see then—alas! too late—what things were for his salvation and what unto his condemnation: and the exterior light which surrounded him while living in the bosom of God's Church on earth shall give place to exterior darkness in an eternal hell where all is dark and gloomy, and where no ray of hope or light shall ever enter to

console or comfort him. Nothing but gloom and dark despair reign throughout the vast caverns of the infernal abyss to which he is consigned, and, O God! the writhing anguish of his soul on its first entering hell!

"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" —weeping scalding, fiery tears over his frightful forgetfulness of God's mercies, and gnashing his teeth over the perversity and levity with which he treated the divine truth that was given to sanctify and save him. Many there are in our days of little faith who, unwilling to acknowledge the truth which God teaches by His holy Church, or not willing to live up to her teaching, endeavor to beguile themselves into the belief that there is no hell, at least no *eternal* hell; that only temporary punishment awaits the sinner; but in vain. What will it avail a man to persuade himself during life that there is no eternal punishment, when this denial will not save him from the "everlasting burnings," * or prevent "the Lord from executing judgment on his ungodliness"? † Deny the eternity of hell and you deny the Scriptures, for you put an end to that *exterior darkness;* there would be one ray of hope left to the unfortunate reprobate, that would wipe away his burning tears and ease his gnashing teeth, so that, by no means converted, but rather exasperated by long suffering to hate God and despise Him even more than in this life, he could say, in defiance of the Almighty, at the end of his punishment: "Sin, after all, is not such an evil, for I have attained the same glory and happiness as others who never sinned, or, if they did, afterwards have done great penance,

* Isaias xxxiii. 14. † Jude, 15th verse.

denied themselves, and sacrificed all that was dear in life to the service of God." But no! the Prophet Daniel tells us: "Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always." * It is this *always seeing* and eternal duration of punishment which cause "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

"For many are called, but few are chosen." The Church of God, the holy Catholic Church, extends all over the known world. It is, therefore, widespread enough for every nation of the earth to hear its *call;* and were it not for the deadly indifference and criminal neglect with which people are accustomed to treat the interest of God and the concerns of their own immortal souls, the number of those that *are chosen* would be immensely greater. Even the pagan who never heard of Christianity has the light of reason, and a conscience which tells him what is right and what is wrong. But where shall we find the man who always listens to and obeys this interior monitor? Moreover, besides this natural light every man receives supernatural aid and grace sufficient to save himself, if he chose to do so; for, as St. John tells us, "He [Christ] illumines every man that cometh into this world"; † not that every man that cometh into this world receives, by this sufficient grace, the light and knowledge of the whole truth of Christianity with all the evidences of its credibility, but in this sense: that every created soul receives from God sufficient light to understand and practise certain truths which, if carefully believed and followed up,

* Dan. xii. 2. † St. John i. 9.

will gradually lead it to the knowledge of the saving truth, were it even, as St. Thomas Aquinas says, by a miracle like that which converted Cornelius the centurion, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles,* and many others recorded in the history of the Church.

And here let us remark that a man may be free from other transgressions, and yet guilty of neglecting to do what he knows to be better and safer, especially in such an all-important affair as is the saving of one's own undying soul. Hence he is guilty of resisting God. To refuse even once the offer of God's saving hand is a crime sufficient in itself to determine God to withdraw His hand altogether for the future from the creature acting thus. Now, if this is true of the pagan who never heard the saving doctrines of Christianity in detail, how much more so is it of him that has some knowledge of the doctrine of Christ! A man who believes and searches the Holy Scriptures, "thinking in them to find eternal life,"† no matter how much he may be mistaken in those things "that," as St. Peter remarks, "are hard to be understood, and which the unlearned and unsteady wrest to their own destruction,"‡ cannot help seeing that as they give testimony of Christ, so they give testimony of only one true Church of Christ, and that this one Church is the *kingdom of heaven* on earth, which cannot be divided against itself; a kingdom founded *in truth*, and consequently one that cannot err nor be at a loss to know *what is truth;* a kingdom *founded for ever*, therefore never to perish, but always

* Acts x. 1. † St. John v. 39. ‡ 2 St. Peter iii. 16.

flourishing; a kingdom which, like the stone in Daniel's vision, was cut without men's hands from the summit of Calvary, and, rolling down, broke the statue of Nabuchodonosor — the four greatest empires of the world—became itself a mountain, and covered the whole earth. Blind indeed must he be who flatters himself that the little, insignificant sect to which he belongs, and which, in comparison with the whole Catholic Church of Christ, appears like a mere handful of loose sand, is this immense mountain that covers the earth. Alas! it is only prejudice and an indomitable pride of the spirit refusing to make the humble acknowledgment, "I am wrong," which lead to such a conclusion. Add to this the complete indifference and neglect of every better inspiration, and you have the real cause of unbelief and misbelief amongst our otherwise intelligent people.

"Many are called, but few are chosen." If there are yet many nations unfaithful to the repeated invitations calling them to the marriage feast of the Lamb—the true faith; if even among those already in the hall of the marriage feast—among the members of the true Church—there are many who neglect to wear the wedding garment, can we wonder that the great King who invites all, and whose summons is neglected and unheeded by the greater part of men, becomes angry and orders the final sentence to be executed on those who disobey His orders? The cities of those who oppose the Church of Jesus Christ are burnt up and their inhabitants destroyed, while those who appear at the marriage feast without the wedding garment of sanctifying grace are cast

out into *exterior darkness.* Since they refused to admit that exterior light which filled the house of God, they shall now and for ever share the lot of those who lived in exterior and interior darkness, for they loved darkness better than light.

Count up, if possible, how many there are who neglect the divine call and go their own ways, which they wish to justify either by the pressure of temporal business or the letter of the Bible without its spirit; and how many, even at the marriage feast in the house of God—the holy Church—care for the nuptial garment of innocence and sanctifying grace, and you will have a faint idea of the grief and sorrow which filled the heart of Jesus as He repeated the concluding words, "Many are called, but few are chosen." Therefore do not delay to respond to the loving call of your Redeemer. "This day if you hear His voice" interiorly, "harden not your hearts"; for though all are called to eternal glory, few are eventually chosen to enjoy it, because they will not comply with the obligations laid down for attaining it. Hence, though all others should neglect and be lost, and you alone hear the warning and follow it, you have the divine assurance that you shall be among the happy chosen few destined to reign for ever in the kingdom of God's glory.

PART II.

THE CHURCH THE TRUE SPOUSE OF THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR.

CHAPTER I.

THE PERSECUTION TO WHICH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS SUBJECTED IN ALL AGES IS AN INFALLIBLE PROOF THAT SHE IS THE ONLY TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

IT is the decree of Heaven that no one can be admitted to the Saviour's kingdom of glory unless he has faithfully shared His earthly sufferings. "Whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." * "Christ also suffered for us," says St. Peter, "leaving you an example that you should follow His steps." † But let us hearken to what our Divine Redeemer Himself says on the subject. Hear His words: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." ‡ "The disciple is not above his master: but every one shall be perfect, if he be as his master." § Therefore, to be perfectly assimilated to our crucified

* Romans viii. 29.
† 1 St. Peter ii. 21.
‡ St. Matt. xvi. 24.
§ St. Luke vi. 40.

Redeemer, to be conformed in all things to the poor and suffering life of the Son of God made man, is the highest point of Christian perfection and the characteristic of Christian truth.

If, then, it is the proper badge of every true Christian to be conformed to Christ, not only in his interior, by believing all and the same truths which He has taught, and obeying His commands and ordinances by the assistance of His holy grace; but also in his exterior acts, in sufferings, and pain, and persecutions, in poverty and contempt, in all the mysteries of the holy cross—if this, I say, be the characteristic of every true disciple of Christ individually, how much more must it be the characteristic of the whole Church of Christ! For from the individual resemblance of the true Christian with the Son of God crucified must necessarily arise a resemblance of the whole Church taken collectively; and if it be the Church which He foreknew and predestinated for the kingdom of glory, it must be the same Church which He foreknew and predestined to be made conformable to His crucified Son on earth. "Christ suffered for her, leaving her an example that she might follow His steps." Consequently, if there be a perfect resemblance of the suffering Redeemer on earth, it must be found in His Church. For "Christ loved His Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might render it a glorious Church." * And in what do the *glories* of this Church consist, if not in her perfect resemblance to her Divine Spouse, particularly in His sufferings? "Every one shall be perfect if he be as his master," says Jesus Christ. Hence, if the Church is the work of God, and all "God's works

* Eph. v. 25-27.

are perfect," * her perfection must consist in her likeness to Christ in all things. Therefore, we being Christians who believe what the Apostle says, that the Church is the body of Christ, we cannot reflect on the sufferings of the Redeemer without feeling a deep sense of compassion for the sufferings of His mystical body, the Church. In fact, Christ and His Church are blended together; Christ and His Church are one; hence whatever Christ suffers His Church suffers in like manner, and what the Church suffers Christ suffers also. When St. Paul, before his conversion, persecuted the Church, Christ said to him: "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute Me? I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." He does not say, "My Church," but "Me." "I am He whom thou persecutest." † Christ and His Church are one, united by indissoluble ties.

There are many who, like the daughters of Sion, have tears of compassion to shed over the Redeemer's sufferings on His way to Calvary, but who weep not over themselves and their children, who revile and tear to pieces the mystical body of Christ—His holy Church! Let them now, by a careful perusal of the following reflections, come and "see whom they have pierced." ‡

In my present subject I pass over the agony of Christ in the Garden of Olives. This agony was His own; it was caused by the sight of our sins which He took upon Himself, and the ungrateful return we should make for His love and the sufferings He was about to undergo. No one but the God-man Himself foresaw these things, hence no one but the God-man could suffer by them. The Church is not omnis-

* Deut. xxxii. 4. † Acts ix. 4. ‡ St. John xix. 37.

cient; she does not know all the sins of mankind, nor all the evil a sin contains. She only knows that the malice of sin is infinite and cannot be fathomed by any mere creature; and her own sufferings she only knows when she has to undergo them. The agony in the garden, the bloody sweat, were Christ's own. Like a woman in travail, He suffered to bring forth the infant Church, which, being once brought into this world, was to "follow His footsteps." *

Let us first take a hurried view of the enemies of Christ who come to take him captive. They are the same that oppose His Church up to the present day. Like every work of darkness, the captivity of our Lord is effected in the darkness of night, *with lanterns and torches*, the very emblems of perverted and revolting reason; and, with *weapons* of a malicious will, they come forward to seize Jesus Christ—to put to death the eternal Wisdom of the Father, "the King of ages, immortal and invisible."

Who are they that conceive and foster this awful crime? I distinguish three classes of persons in particular, differing in matters of belief, but all united in the one dark design to destroy Jesus, the eternal Truth.

At the head of the infamous crowd appears *Judas Iscariot*, once an Apostle of Christ's Church—the Catholic Church—now a wretched apostate, fallen away from Christ and His Church, and fallen so low that he is even leading the enemies of his Master! Though we must suppose that when called to the apostleship he was sincere, he for some time previous to his treason continued to follow Jesus Christ, though his heart was not with Him; he only ad-

* 1 St. Peter ii. 21.

hered to Him through a motive of self-interest—"he was a thief" *—and when at the last supper Christ gave His Apostles the consecrated bread, saying: "This is My body," † Judas can hardly be said to have believed that it was His body; he took it as common bread, "not discerning the body of the Lord," ‡ and the Evangelist tells us "after the morsel Satan entered into him." § Only then, only after a sacrilegious communion, was he able to accomplish the blackest of treasons, to betray his Lord and Master, the eternal Truth; and how did he ratify this horrid compact? By a kiss, the sign of friendship! O fearful audacity of Judas! "Dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?" Judas pretends to love Christ, he pretends to love "the truth, the way, and the life," and yet he betrays Him with a kiss. To whom? To an armed *crowd* that know nothing whatever about Jesus Christ, nothing about His doctrine, His Church, or His kingdom. They never went to the temple or anywhere else to hear Him preach; they never troubled themselves about religion, but were always on the alert to commit deeds of violence, to create disturbance and riots. Hence it was that when our blessed Lord came forward to meet them, and asked, "Whom seek ye?" they knew Him not until Jesus repeatedly told them, "I am He" ‖—so difficult was it for those unbelievers to know the Divine Truth which they came to attack.

Behind this vile, ignorant rabble follow the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who searched the Scriptures in vain, thinking thereby to be saved, while they could not

* St. John xii. 6. † St. Luke xxii. 19. ‡ 1 Cor. xi. 29.
§ St. John xiii. 27. ‖ Ibid. xviii. 4.

see that they testified to Jesus Christ and His doctrine. In vain had they labored to entangle Him in His speech by asking Him questions; in vain had they recourse to slander and calumny in order to put down His authority amongst the people. The only means now left them to oppress Jesus Christ and His Church was not the power of truth and fair justice, but the weapons of violence and injustice. They were the majority; they had men in authority to uphold them; Judas was ready and willing to betray his Master; the hour of darkness was favorable; Jesus was alone, the Apostles timid and asleep; it was in the dark, gloomy night of affliction when "they took Jesus and bound Him."* So it is with the sects; pretending to believe in the Bible alone, though dissenting and bitterly opposed to each other in matters of religious belief, they all unite whenever they find some distinguished apostate from the true Church to lead them against her. Every attack of their combined efforts is the effect of conspiracies plotted in the light of lanterns; and the first grasp is at the *hands,* to prevent her from working and spreading blessings like the hands of Jesus Christ, that poured out blessings wherever they extended. The first injury and insult offered to Jesus Christ was to bind Him, who, above and before all, should be left free to accomplish His work of divine mercy. Hence we are not to wonder at the fact that the enemies of the Church are always and in all places unwilling to grant her full liberty, though they claim it for themselves, and, whenever an opportunity is offered, bind her down hand and foot by civil laws and enactments.

When our blessed Lord was seized in the garden

* St. John xviii. 12.

St. Peter drew one of the two swords he had in defence of his Master, and "cut off the right ear of the high-priest's servant, Malchus."* These two swords represent the spiritual and temporal authority of St. Peter. Our Lord does not condemn the use of the sword in the hands of St. Peter. He Himself had directed the Apostles that, in times of persecution which they would have to endure, "he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a scrip" full of provisions; for He who knows all things saw they would have little chance of obtaining either from their persecutors. And He adds: "He that hath not, let him sell his coat and buy a sword" for self-defence. And when the Apostles answering said, "Lord, behold here are two swords," He does not say, Throw them away, I forbid you to use them, but He said to them: "It is enough."† Hence, also, when St. Peter drew the sword in the garden to defend Jesus Christ, and cut off the right ear of Malchus, Jesus answering said: "Suffer ye thus far,"‡ and healed the servant. He did not prohibit its use altogether, nor forbid St. Peter the use of it under any circumstance, but "thus far." And if He ordered him to put the sword into the scabbard, adding that "all that take the sword shall perish by the sword," this cannot be taken as a formal prohibition of the use of the sword, but only as a salutary lesson on observing proper discretion in its use, according to times and circumstances, since, generally speaking, he who strikes a blow must also be ready to receive one, and it would be the greatest imprudence to strike where resistance is useless.

If in after-times the successors of St. Peter used

* St. Luke xxii. 36. † Ibid. xxii. 38. ‡ Ibid. xx. 51.

the sword against some of those who had *ears to hear and would not hear,* they did so in order to make them hear, and to heal wounds far more dangerous than that of the ear of Malchus which was healed by Christ.

The Gospel says "they led Him away to Annas first, who was the father-in-law of Caiphas, the high-priest of that year." The Divine Redeemer of mankind was first brought before Annas, to make the preliminary arrangements for His trial; then before Caiphas, the high-priest, in order to be examined by the supreme spiritual authority. The Jewish Church being still at that time the true Church of God on earth, the high-priest was the divinely-appointed interpreter of God's law, and his decision was binding, even when, full of malice, he decreed that "it was expedient that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation perish not. And this he spoke not of himself; but being the high-priest of that year, he prophesied."* Behold, Almighty God did not permit this supreme spiritual teacher in Israel to tell a falsehood in the discharge of his office as long as he held it. Indeed, it was expedient that this *one man,* the God-man, Jesus Christ, *should die for the people;* for what would become not only of one nation, but of the entire world, if Christ had not died for us? Such was the decree of Heaven, and God made use of the tongue of a sinner to proclaim this truth. Although his heart was poisoned with malice, he still held the highest office in God's Church and was the interpreter of His divine will; he declared the truth. "*He prophesied,*" therefore he spoke under divine guidance, "*not of himself.*"

* St. John xi. 50, 51.

This office of the Jewish high-priest was ended when Jesus declared His divine character before Caiphas. For when the Jews assembled in council, and "sought false witness against Jesus that they might put Him to death, and they found none, . . . at last the high-priest, rising up, said to Him: I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ, the Son of God."* Every one can see here that the high-priest addressed our blessed Lord in the manner and with the authority which his office conferred on him; therefore officially. Jesus Christ acknowledged this, and also answered officially, "Thou hast said it." This answer of our Lord is more significant and a stronger affirmation than if He said, Yes, I am the Son of God. It not only contains an answer in the affirmative, but also an argument and proof. If thou, the head of the supreme tribunal, which, teaching the true word of God, is consequently infallible—if *thou* sayest so it must be true. "Thou hast said it"; therefore it is and must be true that I am the Son of God. In this declaration Jesus Christ answers in His official capacity. It was now time for the Jewish high-priest to lay down his authority at the feet of Christ, and to acknowledge Him as the Son of God who from that moment appeared *in foro externo*—as the true High-priest for ever, of whom Caiphas was only the representative. But, alas! instead of acknowledging and professing his belief in the divinity of Christ, he is the first to deny it. "Then the high-priest rent his garments, saying: He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy: what think you?" By rending his garments

* St. Matt. xxvi. 59, 63.

the high-priest tore away (as the holy Fathers of the Church explain it) the Jewish synagogue from the true Church of God, which was then officially announced by Christ Himself to the high-priest and elders, the representatives of the people. By accusing Christ of blasphemy the high priest uttered the first error in the teaching of the Jewish sect. The whole life and doctrine of our Divine Redeemer had been subjected to the most severe scrutiny; there was no sin, with the exception of the sin of impurity (and not even His bitterest enemies dare accuse Him of that), that He was not charged with, although without the slightest shadow of proof; and when, faithful to the truth, He maintained His divine character, He is said to blaspheme. Is not this the very same treatment which His holy Church receives on the part of her enemies and rivals up to the present day? How much time, money, and talent have been wasted on their part to prove to the world that she is a corrupt Church, guilty of every crime, a sink of iniquity, seducing the people? And if she still maintains her divine character and prerogatives granted by her Divine Spouse, she is declared guilty of blasphemy.

"Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and others struck His face with the palms of their hands, saying: Prophesy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee?"* Jesus Christ is detained prisoner over-night in the house of the high-priest, which has become the headquarters of misbelief. The *Eternal* is a prisoner, left in the dark, silent hours of night to the mercy of cruel, heartless ruffians! What are they going to do with Him,

* St. Matt. xxvi. 67.

the living Word of God, the eternal truth of the Father, in whom they profess to believe and yet do not believe ?

Having put a veil on His face, they commence to strike it and ask : "Prophesy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee ?" Oh ! it was not possible to strike that divine face which "angels desire to look on for eternity," * without hiding its celestial loveliness with a veil ! It was too beautiful, too charming; it was the face of the eternal Truth ! And so also, I say, it is impossible to impugn the plain, open Catholic truth without first covering it with the veil of misrepresentation and sectarian prejudice. Oh ! lift up this veil before you strike. Cease to spit upon the face of this truth, and examine her divine features, whose charms are sufficient to convert even her most furious persecutors ! Say not: "Prophesy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee ?" Jesus Christ and His holy spouse, the Catholic Church, know well who it is that strikes ; and the heaviest blows inflicted on Jesus Christ in the person of His Church are those inflicted by the founders of religious sects who, pretending to defend the truth, misrepresent and deny it. Pharisaical bigotry and misbelief veiled the face of Jesus Christ ; pharisaical bigotry veils in like manner the face of the true Church of Jesus Christ by its calumnies and misrepresentations. It smote and spat upon that sacred face by all the slanders and calumnies it uttered, and which excited and still do excite aversion and horror for the Church of the living God. Judge not by appearances, but judge that which is just—a *just judgment.* † The face of

* 1 Ep. St. Peter i. 12. † St. John vii. 24.

God's truth is worth the trouble of examination, and should be looked at as it is in reality, and not as it is misrepresented.

When the high-priest lost the gift of infallibility in doctrines, Peter, who "followed Jesus from afar off," was destined to succeed to this office under the *New Law;* he was very soon to receive the same divine gift of infallibility. This same Peter has just denied his Master thrice, "and the cock crew." Jesus Christ foretold to him this misfortune, which happened through his presumption and over-confidence in his own strength. A few hours before he solemnly renewed his fidelity to his Master, declaring publicly that not even death had power to sever the tie that bound him to His service. This sentiment was most praiseworthy, such as might be expected from the future pillar of the Church; but, alas! in this instance it was the inspiration of self-confidence; hence his fall served to humble him and teach him a salutary lesson for the future, never to rely on his own strength, but always to bear in mind that it is by the grace and Spirit of God that he shall accomplish the great things he is destined for in his office of supreme spiritual ruler, held thus far by the high-priest. Thenceforth Peter denied his Master no more, for "I have prayed for thee," Jesus said to him, "that thy faith"—mark well, "thy faith," not thy morals—"fail not, and thou once converted, confirm thy brethren."* Scarcely had the high-priest exclaimed, "He blasphemeth!" and Peter denied his Master for the third time, when "the cock crew," and our blessed Lord, being led to prison, looked at Peter. Oh! what a look of ten-

* St. Luke xxii. 32.

derness, forgiveness, and mercy. Oh! how eloquent and plainly it spoke to the heart of Peter. How blessed and enduring was its fruit! But, O amiable Jesus! how many times hast Thou not cast this same compassionate glance on the many erring souls that deny and protest against Thy truth. One look converted Peter, and Peter denied Thee no more: he will even confirm his brethren in their faith, which is and always shall be the same as his; but how many looks of Thy most merciful eyes will be required to convert the many thousands, aye, hundreds of thousands, whom Thou lookest on from every line of Scripture which they read, since through it Thou givest testimony to Thy Church, as every line bears on its face the Catholic interpretation, although "there are certain things hard to be understood, which the unsteady and unlearned [not confirmed in the faith of Peter] wrest, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." * "Peter going forth, wept bitterly." † They go on denying the truth of Christ, yet never weep!

Oh! how long and dreary was the night which Jesus Christ spent in that foul, darksome prison. Who can recount the indignities and revolting barbarities He underwent at the hands of the ruthless rabble that had Him in custody? See how much His Church has to suffer on the part of sectarian and schismatical clergy, "that detain the truth of God in injustice," ‡ who, no matter how much they disagree among themselves, or how little reason they have to believe they are right, combine their efforts to suppress the Church of God, in order that those who adhere to them may not become aware that she

* 2 Ep. St. Peter iii. 16. † St. Matt. xxvi. 75. ‡ Rom. i. 18.

is "the pillar and ground of truth,"* the true spouse of Jesus Christ, the way, the truth, and the life!

From the high-priest's house, the tribunal of misbelief, our blessed Lord was led before Pontius Pilate, the tribunal of unbelief and infidelity. What justice or mercy can be expected from an unbeliever? Before the high-priest the enemies of Christ attacked His spiritual character, accusing Him of teaching false doctrines, breaking the law of Moses and misleading the people, etc. But in presence of Pontius Pilate, the head of the temporal power, they change their tactics altogether. Not a word is said of their former accusations. Here the Lord of lords and King of kings is represented as a rebel against the temporal power; that He caused seditions, forbade tribute to be paid to Cæsar, and endeavored to make Himself King of Israel! Here we see the efforts of pharisaical bigotry to foment discord and jealousy between the spiritual and temporal powers.

Pontius Pilate, although a pagan, was unprejudiced, and, at the beginning, disposed to administer justice. He heard the accused as well as the accusers. When, in answer to his question, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus replied that His kingdom was not of this world, Pilate understood at once (what many politicians nowadays have so much difficulty to understand) that there can be no opposition between the spiritual and temporal powers; that each one has its own sphere, and that, if Jesus Christ was guilty of religious offences, He was to be judged by the spiritual authority. Hence it was that Pilate refused

* 1 Tim. iii. 15.

at first to interfere in the matter, seeing Christ was innocent of any violation of temporal rights; for this reason he endeavored to release Jesus. But, alas! Pilate, the impartial judge, was the slave of human respect; hence he was not free to pass a just judgment and release Jesus. He wanted to do right, but coveted popularity, tried to combine justice with private interest, and consequently acted against the light of conscience, which pointed out what was wrong and what was right. He sent Jesus to Herod, King of Galilee, with a view to regain the favor of that king; for the Scripture remarks they "were enemies before, one to another."

Jesus is then led before Herod, the tribunal of the *world.* What mercy or justice shall Divine Truth find when judged by the world, whose maxims are in direct opposition to the maxims of Christ? It was King Herod who murdered St. John the Baptist for daring to say to that adulterous king: "It is not allowed!" Herod, intoxicated by luxury and wealth, who sacrificed the greatest man born of woman in order to please a dancing girl, is not the man to do justice to Jesus Christ, or risk his popularity, his wealth, his honor, or his pleasures in order to release Him.

Herod was rejoiced to see the Saviour; having heard many things of him, he expected to see a miracle performed before him. This miserable man looked on Jesus Christ as a *juggler* or fool, who merely went about amusing people by his tricks! Thus does the world regard religion. Worldlings look on divine service as a species of amusement; a mere pastime to while away dreary, idle hours;

a luxury to gratify the sensibilities of those who feel piously inclined; a vast field for the display of oratory, architecture, sculpture, painting, and music, without any idea of worshipping God, or consecrating art and science by employing them in doing homage to Him who is their author. They never think that thereby we draw with joy new graces and favors "from the fountains of the Saviour." *

Christ is silent before Herod, and He who has "words of eternal life" refuses to utter a word in presence of this blood-stained, adulterous, and incestuous king. By this time Herod had come, as Scripture expresses it, *to the depth of sin:* "The wicked man, when he is come into the depth of sin, contemneth." † He whose conscience speaks no more is come into the depths of sin; then he contemneth. But whom does he contemn? Jesus Christ, who *is silent.* There can be no more certain sign of a man's eternal reprobation than when he knowingly and wilfully contemns the truth of Christ announced by His holy Church; precious words destined to save him from hell, they shall serve, by his own fault, only to plunge him deeper into its flames. How many unfortunate souls nowadays are so wedded to error and the liberty it gives their unlawful passions that no matter what light God gives them, or what argument is brought forth to convince them of their errors, they receive all in a spirit of silent contempt! No wonder that Christ is in like manner silent towards them. "Seeing, they see not; hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand," ‡ although they may be far advanced in every branch of human science.

* Isaias xii. 3. † Prov. xviii. 3. ‡ St. Matt. xiii. 13.

"And Herod, with his army, set Him at naught." He called Him a fool, and commanded Him to be clad in a white garment, the distinctive dress of an idiot. O heavens! what an insult. The increate Wisdom, the Ancient of Days, is treated as a fool. And yet let us not wonder, for if "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," * the wisdom of God was always foolishness with the world; and again, "wisdom is not found in the land of them that live in delights." † Therefore true Christian wisdom is reputed folly by the world; hence worldlings shall exclaim on the last great day of judgment: "These are they whom we held in derision. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and amongst the saints is their eternal lot." ‡ Whoever, therefore, professes the Catholic faith must be prepared to pass for a fool in the eyes of the world. Protestantism is loved and cherished by the world, in spite of its errors and contradictions, because it is the spirit of the world; it has cleared out of its dogmas all things that are *spiritually* examined, and brought them down within the limits of natural reason, which everybody has in common with the "animalis homo," the sensual man, whom St. Paul describes expressly in these words: "The sensual man does not understand these things that are of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, for they are spiritually examined." § It is thus the Catholic Church still believes with regard to those things which are of the Spirit of God; therefore it is no strange affair that they are foolishness in the

† 1 Cor. iii. 19. † Job xxviii. 13. ‡ Wis. v. 3–5. § 1 Cor. ii. 14.

eyes of Protestantism, as well as in the eyes of the world; for Protestantism and the world are one, even as Christ and His Church are one. The worldly-minded Herod treated Christ as a fool, so the Protestant world treats Catholicity. The Church must resemble her suffering Spouse.

The Gospel remarks that "Herod and Pilate were made friends that same day: for before they were enemies one to another";* but this friendship is made at the expense of Jesus Christ. So, also, no matter what opposition exists between the sects, if there is question of opposing the Catholic Church they all fraternize, become friends and are one, even if "before they were enemies one to another."

From Herod's palace Christ is sent back to Pilate, who wished to do justice without risking his popularity. He wished to serve two masters, and failed to satisfy either. Instead of passing a sentence of justice at the risk of incurring the displeasure of the wicked, he had recourse to a compromise—a compromise made at the expense of innocent Jesus. And, in fact, this is what takes place whenever the spiritual order comes in conflict with the temporal: a compromise can only be made at a serious loss to the former. It is the interest of Jesus Christ, the interest of truth and justice, that must suffer.

As Pontius Pilate would not release Jesus through fear of displeasing the Jews, he commanded that He should be stripped and scourged like a slave. He, the appointed judge of the land, sacrifices innocent Jesus to his cowardly policy. In like manner, if you modify and adapt the teachings of Jesus Christ to suit the spirit of the age—that is, according to the

* St. Luke xxiii. 12.

wishes and passions of the multitude, harangued and misled by bigoted Scribes and Pharisees—you may be quite certain eternal truth will be stripped of every supernatural good, and the end will be a schism, the most fearful scourge that can afflict the living body of Christ, His holy Church.

Who is able to describe the fearful wrong, the dark injustice inflicted on the Saviour by such barbarous treatment? Who shall tell us of that malice which swayed the scourge in the hand of raging unbelief, cutting deep into His tender flesh and tearing off whole pieces from His sacred body, so that "from the top of His head to the sole of His foot there is no sound spot on Him"?* O good Samaritan! who, moved with compassion, hast bound up the wounds of fallen man, who will bind up those wounds which infidelity and misbelief have opened on Thy innocent body? Go, then, O Christian! and say that heresy and schism are not crimes; say that one religion is as good as another—that is, that Jesus Christ, the eternal Truth of the Father, is indifferent when not only pieces of skin and flesh but whole members are torn from His cherished body, the Church! It is the holy Catholic Church alone that considers heresy and schism as a scourge. It is only she, the living body, that feels the pain—not the dead flesh and lifeless members which the scourge has torn from her. It is Jesus Christ that suffers in His mystical spouse.

The holy Evangelist informs us that "the soldiers of the governor taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto Him the whole band: and stripping Him, they put a scarlet cloak about Him: and plait-

* Isaias i. 6.

ing a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand." *

Now, these soldiers were pagans, who had no faith save that of submission to Cæsar, the temporal power; and hearing that Jesus Christ wanted to be King of the Jews, they understood it after the manner represented by the Pharisees and Jewish priests. Even among pagan nations heresy and misbelief accuse the Catholic Church of aiming at temporal power, and thus excite violence against her, in order to prevent these nations from coming to the knowledge of Christ, their true King, by means of His holy Catholic Church, where He promised to be "always, even to the consummation of the world." † When sectarianism speaks to the heathens of the Catholic Church, it is as the soldiers who stripped Jesus Christ and put a scarlet cloak about Him; they strip His holy Church of all the supernatural prerogatives wherewith her Divine Spouse has endowed her, and represent her, frightfully disfigured, to the execration of their neophytes. But is she not the spouse of the King of Heaven, and as such can she be without her crown, sceptre, and purple, the ensigns of royalty? Is she not to be conformed in all things to the Son of God?

If Christ is the head of the Church, He is so in the quality of spouse, as the husband is the head of the wife. But it does not follow from this that the visible Church should not have a visible head of her own, as the wife has a head of her own. Christ, the invisible bridegroom, is not betrothed to a visible spouse without a head. Now, the love of the faithful towards the Church contrived that her visible head

* St. Matt. xxvii. 27-29. † Ibid. xxviii. 20.

should wear a crown and be independent of every temporal sovereign. Jesus Christ intended the Church to be the Church of all nations, no matter what their manners, customs, and forms of government might be; it therefore must be a holy Catholic Church, not the Church of one particular nation; governed by a Catholic head, and not by the tricks and caprices of temporal princes, who may misuse the spiritual power for temporal purposes and not for the interest of Jesus Christ. The experience of a thousand years taught the children of the Church how very necessary it was for her well-being that the pope, her visible head, should be free and independent. Hence a "crown" was placed on his head—a crown of gold, the symbol of the love and sincerity with which Christians adhere to and respect the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Scarlet was adopted as the distinctive color to be worn by cardinals, the highest dignitaries of the Church, in remembrance of the baptism of blood wherewith Jesus Christ was baptized when tied to the *pillar of truth;* as also to remind those who are honored with this sacred livery of the obligation they are under to sacrifice life and blood for the Church of Him who "has loved us and delivered Himself up for us."* The pope's sceptre is the cross, upon which died "the Author and Finisher of our faith."† But, alas! how soon and how often was this crown of gold turned into a crown of thorns, the sceptre into a reed, and the scarlet of the highest honor into a scarlet cloak of mockery—not by the faithful members of the Church, but by unbelief and misbelief, the sworn enemies of the Church of Jesus Christ! And is it not a remarkable fact that the fiercest enemies

* Gal. ii. 20. † Heb. xii. 2.

of Christianity—pagans, idolaters, etc.—always direct their first attacks not against the sects but against the Catholic Church, and that the sects in this case make common cause with infidelity, aiming their first blows in every instance at the head of the Catholic Church? Hence is it not evident that the crown which adorns the head of the Church is a thorn in the eyes of her enemies, and that the ruthless hand of the soldier is employed to strike off this memorial of a people's love when they use violence against the spouse of Christ? Is it not precisely that same scarlet cloak that has been traduced by the mockers of truth into an object of mockery and ignominy? And when they strike it is not with the sceptre, the cross of Jesus Christ, but with the *reed* of their own opinions, "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine,"* which they apply with all the violence in their power. But the harder they strike the more deeply enters the crown, and the more are Catholics convinced how necessary it is for the head of the Church to wear a crown—to be independent in temporal in order to be free in spiritual matters.

Be not, therefore, surprised when unbelief and misbelief unite, like Pontius Pilate and the Jews, to disfigure Christ and His Church, and then leave to the choice of the multitude, already poisoned by their prejudices and hate, to choose between Christ and Barabbas—between innocence and vice. When Pontius Pilate presented to the people Jesus Christ, bearing the crown of thorns on His head, the scarlet cloak on His shoulders, and in His hand a reed for a sceptre, he exclaimed, as he pointed to the hapless sufferer: "Ecce Homo"—Behold the man, if it be possible to

* Eph. iv. 14.

recognize Him as a man in His actual condition, and not rather a worm and the outcast of mankind. The people looked at Him, but no sympathy was aroused in their obdurate hearts; infatuated by the Pharisees, they shouted frantically: "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him, crucify Him!"* Alas! "seeing they see not, hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." They "search the Scriptures, thinking in them to have eternal life," † yet they see not that the Scriptures give testimony to Jesus Christ, that He whom they had so cruelly tortured and disfigured was "the Man" whom Israel expected. So, in like manner, although the Scriptures, and Christ Himself in them, give testimony to the only one true Church, holy, Catholic, and apostolic, bigoted sectarians have so disfigured her by misrepresentations in the eyes of nations outside of her pale that whenever anything Catholic is proposed to them, be it ever so good and useful, they exclaim at once, "No Popery, no Popery!"—in other words, "Away with Him! crucify Him!" "Not Him, but Barabbas." Now, "Barabbas was a robber." Whoever is chosen, even by a whole nation, as a spiritual guide in opposition to Jesus Christ and His Church, is also a Barabbas, "a thief and a robber." "Amen, amen, I say to you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber." ‡ How many teachers of false religions have proved themselves such doubtful characters that in the daily intercourse of life honest and intelligent men would not trust them a cent on credit! And yet there are people to be found who believe them in preference to Christ and His

* St. John xix. 15. † Ibid. v. 39. ‡ Ib. x. 1.

Church, and entrust to them their eternal salvation!

While Pontius Pilate, struggling with the voice of conscience, still hesitated to condemn our blessed Lord, the Jews, like so many wild beasts at the sight of blood, became still more furious, and from petitions proceeded to threats: "If thou release this man thou art not Cæsar's friend"; * and Pilate, poor Pilate, with full power in his hands to release Jesus, has no power. He fears Cæsar, but does not fear God. He is more anxious to retain popular favor than a safe conscience, and so, as a political necessity, he condemns an innocent man to die the death of a criminal. He had asked before: "What is truth?" † but did not wait for the answer. It is hard for the great and powerful of this world to hear what is truth. Pilate, therefore, went out to the multitude, consulted and listened to public opinion, then returned to his seat of justice and passed sentence accordingly. How many persons of wealth and intelligence approach as near to the Catholic Church as Pilate was to Christ? They see that the Catholic Church is innocent and free of the charges brought against her, that bigoted misbelief and unbelief have risen up against her, that it is sectarian envy and jealousy which invented so many slanders and calumnies to justify their clamorous demands for her condemnation in the eyes of the public; but these good people, who see and understand all this, have neither the honesty nor the courage to face public opinion and give testimony to truth. Catholicity is not the *fashionable* religion of the day; it is chiefly the religion of the poor, for "the poor you have

* St. John xix. 12. † Ibid. xviii. 38.

always with you," * and "the poor have the Gospel preached to them." † The rich fear to lower themselves by becoming Catholics, to leave the ranks of those who are great in the eyes of the world and take their place among those whom they regard as the ignorant poor; they fear to incur the displeasure of distinguished friends and relatives, or, in other words, to be no more the friends of Cæsar; yet they do not fear that awful threat uttered by the lips of Divine Wisdom, "He that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." ‡ They dread the ignominy of the cross; and this settles the matter and puts an end to further enquiries.

Like those politicians who sacrifice the cause of God and of truth to temporal interests as a political necessity, Pontius Pilate pretends to be innocent, and, to complete the farce of this mock trial, he washes his hands, declaring publicly: "I am innocent of the blood of this man." Pilate was not innocent, although he endeavored to persuade himself and others that he was so. He had power to release and protect Jesus Christ, whom he knew to be innocent, and it was his duty to do so. Had it been King Herod or some other important personage, or friend of his, he would have protected and defended him with all the army of the emperor, which was at his disposal; but as it was Jesus, poor, innocent Jesus, a man of little consequence, as he thought, he did not consider it worth while to make any further efforts or sacrifice to perform his duty, and he condemned innocent Jesus to be crucified, imagining a few drops of water poured on his hands

* St. Matt. xxvi. 11. † St. Luke vii. 22. ‡ St. Matt. x. 33.

would suffice to wash away the guilt of this terrible crime; whereas not even a deluge of boiling, bitter tears, flowing for all eternity, will be sufficient to cleanse the stain of innocent blood that cleaves to his guilty hands. How many are there who abandon the cause of truth—that of the true religion, the Catholic Church—even when the daylight of good sense confutes all the objections which bigoted Pharisees have raised against it; who "neither themselves enter the kingdom of heaven nor allow others to enter"; * who, from human respect and worldly considerations, remain in the state of errors in which they were born and educated, pretending they are innocent of them, and thus fail to give testimony to the truth—that is, to Christ in His only one true Church. Oceans of tears will not suffice to deplore such errors; they resemble the Jews, who, misled by bigoted Scribes and Pharisees, exclaimed: "Away with Him, crucify Him!" although they had heard His doctrines and seen His miracles, and therefore had all the reasons desirable to believe in Him.

Christ is condemned to death by Pilate, the tribunal of unbelief, as He has been by the renegade synagogue, the tribunal of misbelief; whilst Herod, who represented the tribunal of the world, set Him at naught before his whole army. Unbelief knows no Church, no Christ; it allows them no existence; misbelief admits Christ as a mere man with human opinions, His Church as a human institution; it denies their divine characters; whereas the world, without deciding anything, considers and treats Jesus Christ and His Church as playthings, invented for the purpose of furnishing us with a source of

* St. Matt. xxiii. 13.

amusement. It is only in the Catholic Church, the realm of truth, the kingdom of heaven on earth, that Christ is acknowledged and allowed to live in the fulness of manhood, with all His doctrines, precepts, and counsels, with all His institutions and ordinances.

CHAPTER II.

AS THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST PROVED HIS DIVINITY AND ACCOMPLISHED WHAT THE PROPHETS HAD FORETOLD, SO IT IS BY SUFFERING THAT THE CHURCH REACHES HER DESTINY AND SHALL BE GLORIFIED WITH HIM.

PILATE, having renounced his power and right to administer justice, yields to the will and passions of the multitude. The sentence of death is pronounced, and received with fiendish pleasure by the multitude. Their prayer is granted, their thirst for innocent blood about to be satiated. The cross, the instrument of shame and torture, is already prepared. Jesus welcomes it; henceforth it shall be the trophy of His victory over sin and hell, the badge of His elect, the standard to be borne before Him as He advances in great power and majesty to judge all men.

Jesus receives the cross. He embraces it with love and tenderness, placing it with His own hands upon His bleeding and mangled shoulders! If the holy Apostle St. Andrew, as it is related in the history of his martyrdom, was so overjoyed at the sight of the cross on which he was to die that he cried out: "Hail, O precious cross, so long desired, and at last

prepared for my craving heart! Give me back to Christ, my Master, who has hung on thee!"—if this was so with the servant, how much more did Jesus Christ cherish the cross, since "the disciple is not above the Master"! Is not the love of this holy cross a distinguishing characteristic of the one true Catholic Church, particularly when compared with the modern sects? They have altogether discarded it; they have torn it from the steeples of churches, and broken it into pieces when they demolished Catholic altars. They have trampled it under foot, in order to gain access to pagan nations for the purpose of traffic, as we see by the conduct of the Dutch in Japan.

The sects, moreover, teach that Christ suffered for us, in order that *we* might be free from punishment; they therefore reject the necessity of penitential works and ridicule the conduct of Catholics, who consider it a duty to chastise themselves and carry their cross with Jesus Christ. What reasons can a pious Protestant, then, have to love suffering, to love the cross of Christ, when he is taught that his sufferings avail him nothing, as Christ Himself alone has undergone all the salutary suffering? But not so with a good Catholic; he loves his sufferings for the sake of Jesus Christ, because the Divine Word teaches him that if he "has suffered with Christ, he also shall be glorified with Him." * He knows that it is not sufficient to repent of his sins, he must likewise do penance for them; for, says Christ: "Except you do penance, you shall perish all together." † If the good Catholic glories in anything it is in the cross of Jesus Christ—that is to say, in the amount

* Rom. viii. 17. † St. Luke xiii. 5.

of suffering which has been allotted to him to bear for the love of his Divine Master. And even if, like Simon of Cyrene, he is forced to carry the cross after Jesus, he will make a virtue of necessity, and bear his sufferings cheerfully and without complaint as long as God wills it, remembering those words of Christ: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." * Where is there, or ever was there, one pious Protestant who, like St. Teresa, would ask our Lord: "Aut pati, aut mori"—either to suffer or to die; or like St. Magdalen de Pazzi: "Pati et non mori"—let me suffer and not die; or with St. Francis Xavier, when he saw in a vision numberless crosses coming down upon him from heaven, signifying how much he should have to suffer in India and Japan: "Amplius, Domine, amplius"—Yet more, O Lord! yet more? It is only the Catholic Church that teaches her children "to glory in the cross of Jesus Christ."† To those who are outside her pale this cross will be always a "stumbling-block and a folly." ‡

When the Divine Victim arrives at the summit of Calvary "they offer Him wine mingled with myrrh." This was intended to intoxicate Him and stupefy the senses, in order to render the pains of crucifixion less sensible; but our Lord, having tasted, refused to drink. He did not seek to avoid the least pain, but endured the extremity of agony. Wine mixed with gall is the only comfort which the world, delicate to excess in its own pleasures, has to offer its dying Saviour. The pleasures of the world are intoxicating they are never pure, and only too often are mixed with the gall of bitterness and disappointment;

* St. Matt. xvi. 24. † Gal. vi. 14. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 23.

they stupefy the senses, it is true, and make men forget that they are destined not to seek a paradise on earth, but the cross as the surest and safest means to attain the everlasting paradise of heaven. "They who are Christ's have crucified their flesh with its concupiscences." * They shun worldly pleasures, centre their affections on heaven, and place their treasure in the commandments of the Most High. No wonder that we see thousands of both sexes in the Catholic Church renouncing the world and all its allurements to embrace a crucified and laborious life in some religious order or other, which they know to be a state much despised and calumniated by the sects!

Jesus, the Messias of the world, has arrived at the place of sacrifice; there He is divested anew of His garments. The upper one is speedily removed, and is afterwards shared among his executioners; as, in later times, confiscated Church property was shared by the enemies of the Church. But oh! the unutterable anguish of Jesus when they tore from Him the seamless garment, which was next His skin. It had adhered to the open wounds of His mangled body, and in this terrible ordeal the very bones were laid bare by the tearing of the flesh from His tender body!

This seamless garment represents, as the holy Fathers of the Church explain it, the unity of the true Church, the unity of faith in all its members, or rather *His* members—for the Church is the body of Christ; her members are His members. Hence this garment cannot be rent or taken from Him without inflicting excruciating pain; and those who

* Gal. v. 24.

advocate heresy and schism share the sentiments of Christ's executioners as well as perform their office; for while they lacerate His body and rend the garment of unity they mock at Him, saying: "We do Thee no harm; it is for Thy greater glory; it is to reform the Church, to save the truth, to restore the Gospel to its purity, the true doctrine of Christ without note or comment."

At last Jesus is nailed to the cross. The mighty strokes of the hammer drive the nails through His hands and feet. The Divine Victim is laid on the altar; the sacrifice commences; the cross is lifted up and sinks into a hole in the rock, where it is fastened. And now He is glorified; now He is exalted; the most ardent wish of His life is accomplished, for "When I shall be exalted from the earth," says He, "I will draw all things to Myself." * Yes, He begins already to draw all things to Himself; for all things were made for Him, but not all would be drawn to Him.

He first draws His enemies. No sooner is He exalted on the cross before the gaze of an innumerable multitude than He lifts His eyes to heaven, and prays: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." † There is no ignorance so pernicious or more to be dreaded than that which ignores Jesus Christ and His holy Church, which mocks and persecutes Him, thinking all the time it is doing God a service and promoting the cause of truth. "They know not what they do"; still they do it, even when warned not to do so. How many endeavor to be good, kind, charitable, and just to all mankind, but when there is question of

* St. John xii. 32. † St. Luke xxiii. 34.

the Catholic religion they think it no harm, but a kind of zeal, to persecute this Church by every means in their power, although they know not what this Church is or what it teaches! They will not even take the trouble to make an impartial enquiry about it. Still the Catholic Church prays daily with her Divine Founder: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Their ignorance, inaccessible to every argument, even to the grace of God, has grown into fanaticism and madness.

Exalted on His cross, the Divine Victim draws to Himself one of the two thieves that were crucified with Him. He was converted, and believed in spite of the misbelief and the unbelief that surrounded him, mocking the eternal living Truth crucified before them. The other of His companions in death would not be drawn, refused to be converted; he followed his own private judgment, at the side and in defiance of the living Truth, who desired to save him, and departed from his cross of torments to be condemned to the hell of the reprobate; whereas the believing and repentant thief heard from the lips of Jesus Himself the consoling words: "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." *

Here also on His throne of suffering Jesus Christ draws to Himself His holy Mother and St. John the Apostle, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." The last bequest, the last pledge of redeeming love, was made to St. John, the faithful Apostle, and in him to the whole Catholic Church, which shares the inheritance of this privileged saint; for it is written, "From that hour the disciple took her to his own." † Where is the pious and sincere Protestant who would take Mary,

* St. Luke xxiii. 43. † St. John xix. 27.

the blessed Mother of Jesus, to his own, and love and revere her as such? On the other hand, where is the Catholic, though he may not be over-zealous and pious in his conduct, who does not love this blessed Mother, and look to her with eyes of filial affection as to his mother? Protestantism condemns the love and veneration of the Mother of God as being contrary to the wishes of her Divine Son and derogatory to His dignity as the only mediator of mankind. Catholicism considers it a duty to love and respect her as a mother, since Jesus Christ Himself loved and respected her as such, and commanded His disciple to do the same to the end of his life.*

* No matter what Luther said or wrote against the Catholic Church, her doctrine was so deeply engraven on his heart and soul that his true conviction broke out from time to time in spite of himself, and laid open his real sentiments. Hear how he prays to the blessed Mother of God in the preface to his exposition of the Magnificat (tom. i., Jen., fol. 477a): "Dieselbe zarte Mutter Gottes wolt mir erwerben den Geist, der solch ihr Gesang möge nützlich und gründlich auslegen. Euer Fürstlichen Gnaden, und uns allen heylsamen Verstand, und löbliches Leben, daraus zu nehmen; und dadurch im ewigen Leben loben und singen mögen das ewige Magnificat. Das helffe uns Gott! Amen." (May the same tender Mother of God obtain for me the spirit to expound this her song in a useful and sensible manner; that your Princely Grace, as well as each and all of us, may take from it a salutary understanding and praiseworthy life, that thereby we may be enabled to praise and sing in life everlasting the eternal Magnificat. Thus help us God. Amen.) Fol. 489a he says: "Maria will nicht eine Abgöttin seyn; sie thut nichts; Gott thut alle Ding. Anruffen soll man sie, dasz Gott nach ihrem Willen gebe, und thue, was wir bitten. Also auch alle andere Heiligen anzuruffen seynd." (Mary does not want to be a goddess; she does nothing; God does everything. But we should invoke her, in order that God, according to her will, may give and do what we ask. So also all other saints are to be invoked.) Luther concludes this exposition of the Magnificat in the following manner (fol. 499b): "Alhier lassen wirs diszmahl bleiben, und bitten Gott um rechten Verstand dieses Magnificat, der da nicht allein leuchte, und rede, sondern auch brenne und lebe in Leib und Seel. Das verleihe uns Christus durch die Fürbitt und Willen seiner Mutter Maria. Amen." (Here now we conclude this time, and beg of God the grace to understand this Magnificat aright, that not only may it burn and speak in us, but also live and shine in all our actions. May Christ grant us this grace through the will and prayers of His Mother Mary. Amen.)

The redeeming tide which was to wash away the stains of human guilt trickled slowly from the hands and feet of Jesus during the three hours of physical and mental anguish which He endured upon the cross. His dying eyes rested affectionately on the heartless multitude, whose voices now swelled into one chorus of universal reproach, as the Scripture informs us: "They that passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads, and saying: Vah, Thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it: save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests with the Scribes and ancients mocking, said: He saved others; Himself He cannot save: if He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him," etc.* Up to the time of our Lord's Passion the Jewish Church was the temple of God. This temple Christ destroyed when He rejected the synagogue, announcing Himself officially before the high-priest Caiphas, but rebuilt it during the three days of His glorious Passion and Resurrection. The Jewish priesthood and its followers, having strayed from the truth, had immediate recourse to the chief weapons of falsehood, mockery and raillery. Had they known and loved the truth they would at once have been convinced and have acknowledged that Jesus was God; the wonderful patience exhibited in His Passion was sufficient of itself to prove that He was indeed the Holy One whom Isaias had seen and described in prophetic vision: "He was offered because it was His own will, and He opened not his mouth: He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb

* St. Matt. xxvii. 39-42.

before his shearer, and He shall not open His mouth." * It requires no superhuman power to run from the cross, to shun or avoid suffering; all men are naturally inclined to this. But to remain on the cross, to suffer and die on it, when one can escape its torture without difficulty—this is indeed a wonderful thing of which God alone, or one whom He endows with divine courage, is capable. Therefore our blessed Lord, who knew that no man could come after Him except he "deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Him," heeded not their invitation, "Come down from the cross." He demands nothing from His followers that He has not performed Himself; and if He should abandon His cross before death, who after that would have courage to be faithful to the end?

But let us see; were these words of the enemies of Christ never repeated by the persecutors and rivals of the Catholic Church? How many hundreds have been seduced from the seclusion of their monasteries, convents, and solitudes, where they lived crucified lives after the example of Christ and His Apostles, when the voice of the so-called Reformers and their adherents reached them? Listen to their seductive invitation: "Why do you break up the temple of God, your body, with fasting and austerities of life? If you want to be a child of God, come down from the cross and enjoy the liberty of the children of God which we enjoy. Christ has suffered enough for us; our sufferings are useless; it is folly, a crime, to live, as you do, such a crucified life. Come down from the cross; we care not what becomes of you hereafter, but only that you come down from the cross and believe as we do. It is vain and wrong for you

* Is. liii. 7.

to take vows, to become 'obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.'* If our Redeemer has done so, you need not imitate Him nor 'follow His steps,' but ours; ours is the way that leads to life —at least it lets you enjoy the present life. Catholicity takes from you the pleasures of this life, and points out to you those of the next. Instead of following the example of suffering Jesus, who, 'having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame,'† we prefer to follow the example of the thieves that were crucified with Him, who enjoyed life as long as they could, and, when attached to the cross against their will, waited for the word: 'This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.'" But hear and consider that it was only one of the two who was thus favored: he who was sincerely converted and endured his cross in the spirit of penance received this promise; whereas the other, who did not believe, but persevered in his blasphemous ideas of Christ even to the end, was condemned to eternal perdition.

Having already alluded briefly to the special honor claimed by our Lord Himself for His holy Mother, and shown that Catholics alone have, in every age, carried out this sweet doctrine, I think it well, before closing this little treatise, to make some additional remarks on the prerogatives of that sinless Virgin whom *all generations shall call blessed.* "Now," says the holy Evangelist, "there stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, had seen His Mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He said to His Mother:

* Philip. ii. 8. † Heb. xii. 2.

Woman, behold thy son. After that He said to the disciple: Behold thy Mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own." * This was the last pledge of love given by the dying Saviour before He gave up the ghost. After He had given all for us, even His very garments, which the executioners shared among themselves, there was yet one object infinitely dear to His sacred Heart; that was His blessed Mother, the faithful companion who had shared His poverty and sufferings from the manger of Bethlehem to Golgotha. As He has given Himself, so He also gives this beloved Mother, to His true disciples, in every age, who inherit the faith and charity of that disciple "whom Jesus loved." Mary is the Mother of Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ is our brother: therefore Mary is *our* Mother also. As such she was given to St. John, and, in his person, to all those who adhere to Jesus with the faith, love, and purity of the Beloved Apostle. Now, there can be no doubt that Jesus Christ, as a dutiful Son, loved and revered His Mother; neither can we doubt that the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who received Mary from Jesus Christ to be his Mother, and "took her to his own," loved and revered her as his Mother also. There is no Catholic instructed in his religion who has not been taught from infancy, or from the day of his conversion to the faith, to take Mary to his own, and love and revere her as Jesus Christ Himself and St. John loved and revered her. But where is there even one denomination of Protestantism that would recommend to its followers such a doctrine? Was it not the characteristic of Protest-

* St. John xix. 25–27.

antism, no matter in what shape or under what name it presented itself, to deprive Mary, the Mother of God, of this special love and respect which she received from her Divine Son, His loving Apostle, and all true Christians, and to reduce her in the estimation of its followers to the rank of an ordinary pious woman ? It is only in the Catholic Church that we see fulfilled to the letter the prophetic words of Mary—and holy Scripture says expressly that she was inspired by the Holy Ghost when she spoke them—"Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." * The incessant efforts of Protestantism to do away with the honor and respect due to this heavenly Queen, allowing her at most to be called "The Virgin," never the "*Blessed* Virgin," and abolishing wherever it can every vestige of special devotion paid to her, proves as clearly as daylight that not only it has no share in the bequest made to St. John at the foot of the cross, and that it is not animated by the spirit of that holy Apostle, who from that hour took Mary as his own, but that it belongs to the seed of that serpent which "lies in wait for the heel of the woman who crushed his head." † Wherever this woman places her foot the serpent is lying in wait to blot out every vestige of her presence ; and wherever Protestantism finds love and reverence for the blessed Mother of Jesus, who is also our Mother, it endeavors to extinguish and annihilate them ; and this it calls Reformation !

The three hours of our Lord's agony were about to close, and the interior dereliction which He endured wrung from his heart the mournful complaint: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?" Then,

* St. Luke i. 48. † Gen iii. 15.

to give us some idea of His destitution and want of even the most trifling relief, in His agony he cries out, "I thirst," when one of the soldiers, dipping a sponge in vinegar, presented it to His lips. Jesus, having taken the vinegar, said: "It is consummated," "and, bowing down His head, gave up the ghost." * The work which Thou gave Me to do, O heavenly Father! is finished: the Gospel is preached, the Church is founded, the holy sacraments are instituted, the ransom is paid; all that I could do to gain the affection of man is done; every feeling and every sense has its torment. My task is performed; it is consummated. "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." †

As "it is appointed for all men once to die," there comes a moment in the life of each one that obliges him to say, "Consummatum est"—It is consummated! Whatever his life may have been, it is finished. Whether a life of unsullied innocence, of self-sacrificing charity and godliness, or a life of self-deceit, lust, rebellion, and crime, "it is consummated." And it is particularly at this awful moment, when we are about to step into the tomb, that the divinity of the true religion shines forth in its brightest lustre. I do not maintain that all who die outside the pale of the true Church die on the ragged edge of despair, in relentless remorse of conscience, trembling with anxiety and fear. Neither do I assert that in the last hour every member of the true Church is exempt from a share of that death-agony which forced the Saviour Himself to exclaim: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" As a general thing experience teaches that men die

* St. John xix. 30. † St. Luke xxiv. 46.

as they lived—death is the echo of life; so those who never feared God, never directed their thoughts to serious reflection concerning their future state, being satisfied to live a mere natural or animal life, die apparently content with the stoic resignation of a brute, that fears dissolution but no future, because it knows of nothing to fear or hope for hereafter. Many, no matter of what religion, have an idea, implanted in their minds from very infancy through the teachings of their sects, that they are the elect of God, and therefore sure of heaven, in spite of all their sins and religious doubts, which they never cared to rectify, though favored with many warnings, both internal and external. They continue to say, "Lord, Lord," up to the last moment, and never admit the fear that they themselves belong to that class to whom the Saviour says He will address those words which exclude all hope: "I never knew you: depart from Me, all ye that work iniquity."* Well may they seem to die in peace; but it is not the peace of the Lord, but a self made, artificial peace, of which the Lord has said: "Peace, peace, and behold there was no peace."† They never remembered that "with fear and trembling they should have worked out their salvation."‡ Having been taught that Christ did all for them, they never believed in the necessity of working out their salvation, and neither in life nor in death did they fear and tremble, except at the approach of bodily pain and imminent material dissolution. But if, by a special grace at that hour, they fear and tremble for their salvation, they either yield at once to the solicitations of this grace—especially when, acquainted with the Catholic

* St. Matt. vii. 23. † Jeremias vi. 14. ‡ Phil. ii. 12.

faith, they return to the true fold at the eleventh hour—or, resisting grace, give evident signs of dying in despair. And here I appeal to a fact well worth the notice of our non-Catholic brethren: that there is scarcely a Catholic priest to be found who, having exercised his sacred ministry for some time in places not altogether Catholic, has not had the consolation of receiving some dying non-Catholic, at his own request, into the fold of the mother Church; whereas we have yet to hear of a single instance in which a Catholic in the pangs of death has sincerely expressed a desire to change his religion and join some sect before appearing in the presence of his Judge. But what must we say when we approach the death-bed of those pious and saintly persons who, "having fought the good fight, finished their course, kept the faith, are now expecting the crown of justice which shall be given them on that day by the just Judge," * and behold not only their heroic example of piety, patience, resignation, and humility, but those supernatural manifestations seldom absent from the death-bed of the Catholic saints, as we read in the history of their lives, attested by the sworn testimony of eye-witnesses? For the Psalmist tells us: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints"; † and well may we ask the question: Why is it that we never hear of such wonderful proofs of sanctity in the lives or deaths of the most prominent members of other religious denominations? Because in the Catholic Church alone true sanctity is found. To deny these marvels of the Omnipotent, displayed in the lives and deaths of Catholic saints, would be to share in the crime of

* 2 Tim. iv. 7. † Ps. cxv. 15.

the Scribes and Pharisees at the death of our Lord. After Jesus expired on the cross the sun was darkened, the rocks burst asunder, the dead came forth alive from their tombs, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, all nature was convulsed; so that even the pagan centurion who stood by the cross on guard struck his breast and confessed, "Indeed this was the Son of God." But the Pharisees heeded none of these supernatural manifestations; wagging their heads, they continued to call Him an *impostor*. Such a denial pierces the heart of Jesus; it tears asunder the hidden designs of an infinitely loving God; it is a crime against the well-known truth, a sin against the Holy Ghost, of which our Lord has said: "It shall not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the next"; * it is a wilful, unconquerable ignorance which shall only be enlightened after death, when, as St. John observes, "they shall look on Him whom they pierced." †

Scripture informs us that "one of the soldiers with a spear opened the side of Jesus, and immediately there came forth blood and water." ‡ According to the testimony of the most ancient Fathers of the Church, this blood and water signified the two elements which form and cement the body of the Church—namely, Baptism and the Eucharist. By Baptism we are regenerated and made members of Christ's mystical body—His holy Church; and by the most precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, contained in the Blessed Eucharist, we are made one flesh with Him, as we are one spirit. Where is the true believer to be found whose heart does not ache with compassion when

* St. Matt. xii. 32. † St. John xix. 37. ‡ Ibid. xix. 34.

he remembers that the majority of our American people are not only deprived of the Eucharist, the living bread which satiates and sustains the spirit in its "continual *warfare,*" but are not even baptized? Well may we ask: Who has turned away this life-giving stream of blood and water which gushes from the adorable heart of Jesus and "maketh joyful the city of God"?* It is not the Catholic Church, whose first care at the birth of a child is to bring it under the quickening influence of this stream, to wash away in holy Baptism every stain of sin, and, when it has arrived at the age of discretion and is capable of "discerning the body of the Lord," † to nourish and preserve it with that precious Body and Blood unto life everlasting. Who, then, did it?

We read that "Joseph of Arimathea took the body of our Lord, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own monument, which he had hewn out in a rock." Every day the Catholic Church commemorates the death of our Lord Jesus Christ in the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Let the place of worship be ever so poor, there you find the *monument*—the altar; there also you find the *rock*—the altar-stone, anointed with sweet spices—the holy oil; and there is the clean linen cloth which is to receive the sacred Body of Christ after consecration.

"The chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said while He was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, the sepulchre to be guarded. . . .

* Ps. xlv. 5. † 1 Cor. xi. 22.

And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting guards." Since that day when Pilate permitted the Jews to do as they desired in order to prevent the resurrection of Christ, misbelief (represented by the Jewish priests and Pharisees) and unbelief (represented by Pilate) unite to oppose the action of Jesus Christ and His Church, having recourse, in many instances, to violence and force of arms in order to suppress her. In all countries where they succeeded in suppressing the exterior forms of Catholic worship, or where its members consisted of the minority, there is placed the sentinel to watch her movements; but, thanks to God, there is a country of the most intelligent and prosperous of peoples—if once wholly under the dominion of the true faith—where, although at present vastly non-Catholic, no guard of soldiers is set to prevent her growth or resurrection. The steady cross of Jesus Christ planted on the steeples of His Catholic churches is as well protected by the stars and stripes as the weathercocks and vanes of sectarian meeting-houses, which turn as the wind blows —that is, according to popular whims and prejudices, called the *spirit of the age.*

As it is an undeniable fact that all sects, no matter how much opposed to each other, are always united in their opposition to the Catholic Church, so it was with the Jewish priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, who were joined in close friendship with Pilate and Herod to oppress and crucify Christ. They set it down as a principle that no good can come from Rome; so did the Jews believe that no good could come from Nazareth. They start the war-cry, "No Popery!" as the Jews exclaimed, "Away with Him,

crucify Him!" They labor to affright the American people by impressing them with the idea that if they permit Catholicity to spread in this country the Pope of Rome will come and take possession of it. The Jewish chief priests and Pharisees, "gathered in council," said in like manner: "What do we? . . . If we let Him alone so, all will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and our nation." * And, indeed, the Romans did come, and it was not the Christians who caused the invasion, but the same sects that forty years before exclaimed: "We have no king but Cæsar." † They brought it on by revolting against Cæsar, the emperor of the Romans. And if—which God forbid!—this our beloved country should ever lose its liberty and fall into the hands of Cæsar, it will not be the Catholics of the country nor the Pope of Rome that will counsel or assist them in the parricidal act. Why should they, when they know from a hundred years' experience that Catholicity grows nowhere so rapidly as in the sunshine of civil and religious liberty? But should such a calamity ever take place it will be by means of the sects, animated with the spirit of those who cried: "Not this man, but Barabbas"; and those who now exclaim, "No king! no Popery!" may also one day cry out, "No President, no Congress, no constitution, no liberty!" when they get sufficient power in their own hands. And why not? They are not guided by any fixed principle; their guide is private judgment, which they form according to the spirit of the age. And if the spirit of the age tends towards socialism, communism, or Cæsarism, it is not only possible but even probable that they will defend

* St. John xi. 47, 48. † Ibid. xix. 15.

and uphold these also; always appealing, of course, to the word of the Bible as the rule of their proceedings, which Bible without the Church, the only divinely-appointed interpreter, is nothing more, as an Anglican bishop wisely said, than "a fiddle on which every man plays his own tune." Trusting in the goodness of God, we have every reason to hope this evil will never come upon us. There is the holy Catholic Church steadily growing, "the ground and pillar of truth," not "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine," teaching her children to suffer and die in defence of their country's rights and liberties, as she teaches them to suffer and die in defence of their Church. Besides, there are millions of citizens throughout the States who belong to no sect, or, if they are nominally attached to any one of them, are not so wedded to it as to be willing to sacrifice their country's liberty to the ravings of infuriated zealots whose only religion is hatred of the Catholic Church of God, which they desire to gratify even at the expense of the Constitution of our glorious and time-honored republic. These true American patriots, noble souls that stoop not to prejudice or passion, united at least in national fraternity with the suffering spouse of Jesus Christ, the Holy Catholic Church, will form an impregnable fortress to sustain and defend that independence which heroes won one hundred years ago. Therefore let us be assured that the deeper the American nation is engrafted in the body and spirit of the Catholic Church, the more it partakes of her indestructible conservatism, which is the best safeguard of its rights and liberties; and those who have at heart the welfare of their country cannot aid her better than to unite their energies and

talents, not for the purpose of establishing an alliance between the sects to oppose Catholicity, but to establish by every means in their power a happy reunion in the faith originally "handed down to the saints"; that we may be all *one,* even as Christ and His Father are one; that our prayers may form one sweet odor of incense before the throne of the Almighty, and that the plaintive chant of our vesper hymns may ascend daily from this vale of tears to mingle with the triumphant song of the redeemed, our brethren in the faith, who were found faithful unto death, and therefore now reign with Christ in His heavenly kingdom. Return, then, O children of God! return to the house of your Father, who has "loved you with an everlasting love," to the arms of a mother who yearns for your welfare. Raise your thoughts and affections above the passing shadows of time, and fix them on what awaits you beyond the tomb. "The night approaches, in which no man can work"; "Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation." Now, perhaps, only a little time remains for you to secure heaven. Oh! then reject not this last warning. Hasten to the Bark of Peter, the Church of the Parables, the Suffering Spouse of Jesus Christ, who has said: "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth"; "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." This Bark of Peter is the only one that will bear you in safety to your eternal home. There alone you can tread in the footsteps of Jesus and His saints. Only there "*your soul can die the death of the just, and your last end be like to theirs.*" *

* Num. xxiii. 10.

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